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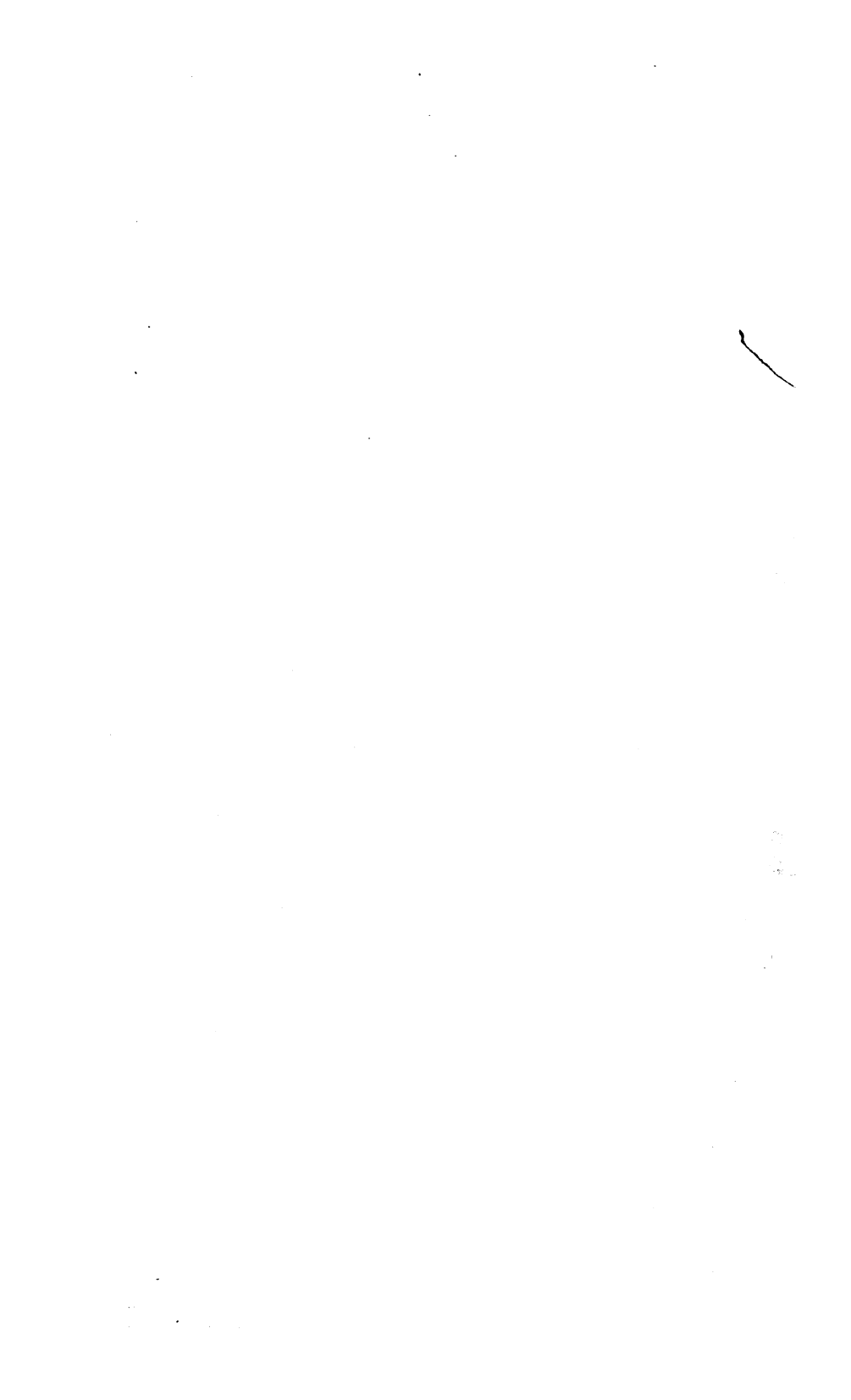
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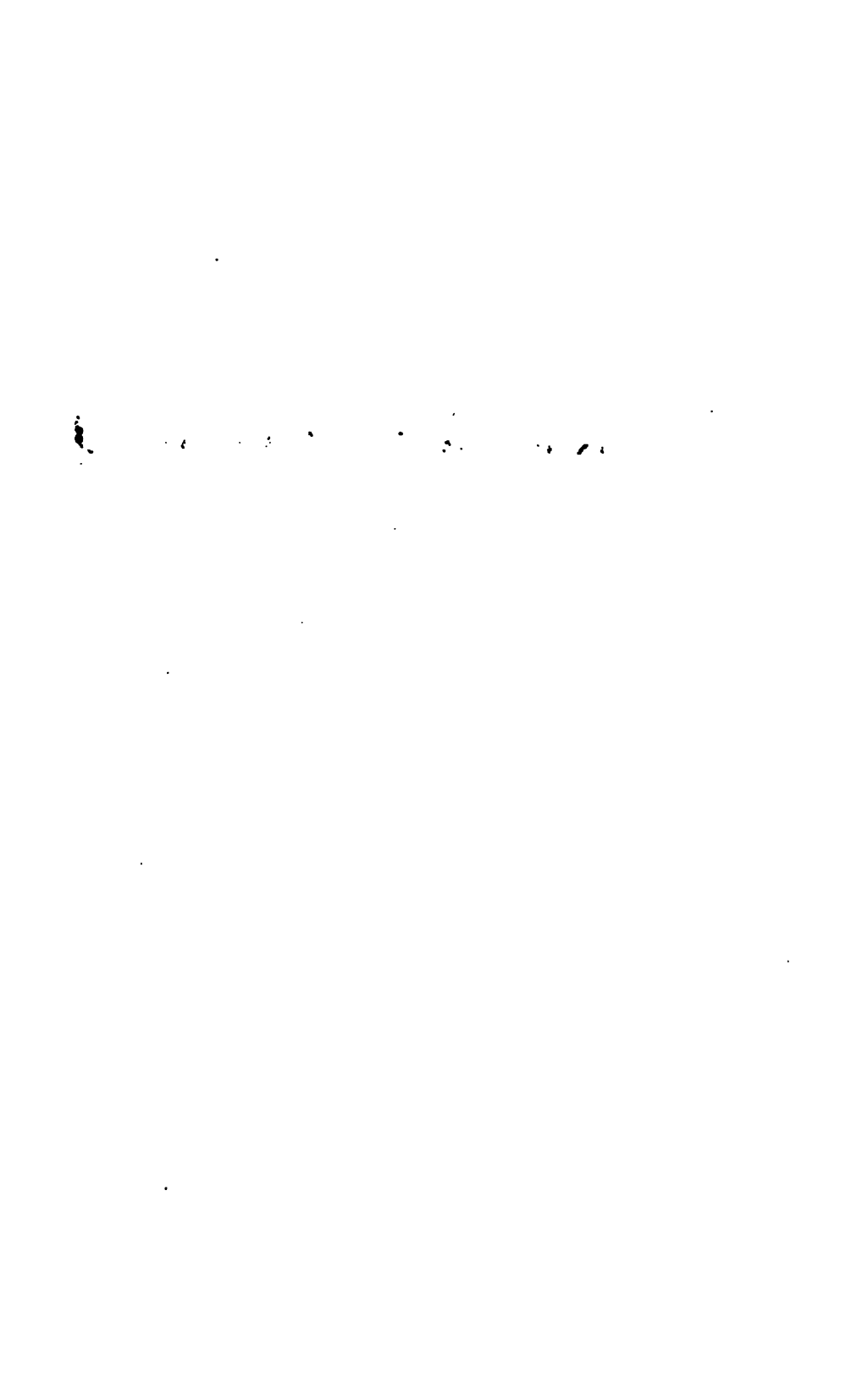


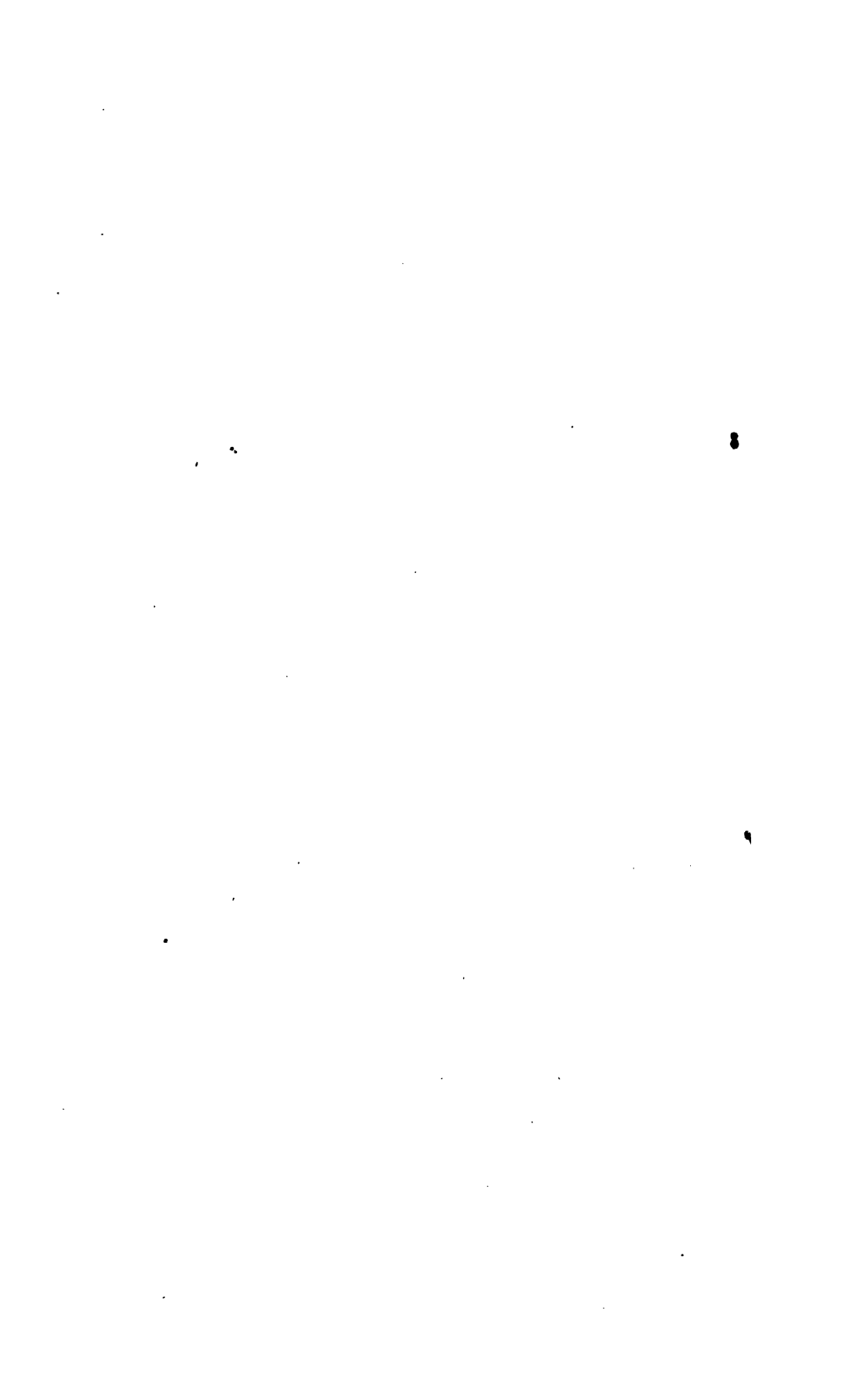












**THE**  
**LECTURES,**  
***CORRECTED AND IMPROVED,***  
**WHICH**  
**HAVE BEEN DELIVERED FOR A SERIES OF YEARS,**  
**IN THE**  
**COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY;**  
**ON THE SUBJECTS OF**  
***MORAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY.***

**THE FORMER PART EMBRACING,**

- I. The general principles of human nature considered as a subject of moral science.
- II. The principles of ethics, or the moral relations and duties of men.
- III. The principles of natural theology.
- IV. And lastly, those of economics, or family relations, as preparatory to the consideration of the relations and duties of civil and political life.

**THE LATTER PART EMBRACING,**

- I. The rules which ought to regulate the conduct of men towards one another in a state of civil society, and the means of enforcing those rules.
- II. The rules and principles which give the form to the society or government itself, and which direct its operations.
- III. And finally, the rules which should govern the conduct of independent governments or states to one another—the whole comprehending those general principles on the subjects of jurisprudence, politics, and public law, or the law of nature and nations, with which every man of liberal information in a free country ought to be acquainted.

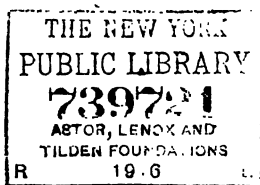
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BY THE REV. SAMUEL STANHOPE SMITH, D. D. L. L. D.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.  
VOLUME I.

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**TRENTON:**  
PUBLISHED BY DANIEL FENTON,  
FOR THE AUTHOR.

.....  
JAMES J. WILSON, PRINTER.

.....  
1812.



***DISTRICT OF NEW-JERSEY, ss.***

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the twenty-ninth day of August, in the thirty-seventh year of the independence of the United States of America, Samuel Stanhope Smith, of the said district, hath deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as author, in the words following, to wit: "The Lectures, corrected and improved, which have been delivered for a series of years in the college of New-Jersey, on the subjects of moral and political philosophy, by the Rev. Samuel Stanhope Smith, D. D. L. L. D. The former part embracing, 1st, The general principles of human nature considered as a subject of moral science. 2d, The principles of ethics, or the moral relations and duties of men. 3d, The principles of natural theology. 4th, And lastly, Those of economics, or family relations, as preparatory to the consideration of the relations and duties of civil and political life. The latter part embracing, 1st, The rules which ought to regulate the conduct of men towards one another in a state of civil society, and the means of enforcing those rules. 2d, The rules and principles which give the form to the society or government itself, and which direct its operations. 3d, And finally, The rules which should govern the conduct of independent governments or states to one another—the whole comprehending those general principles on the subjects of jurisprudence, politics, and public law, or the law of nature and nations, with which every man of liberal information in a free country ought to be acquainted"—In conformity to the act of the congress of the United States entitled "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned," and also an act entitled "An act supplementary to an act entitled an act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the time therein mentioned, and extending the benefit thereof to the arts of designing, engraving and etching historical and other prints."

**ROBERT BOGGS,**  
*Clerk of the District of N. Jersey.*

# LECTURES, &c.



## LECTURE I.



### INTRODUCTORY.

*Philosophy, its nature and design—Divided into two branches—In all its investigations necessary to pursue the method of analysis—A law of nature, what?—Of the mutual influence of the body and the mind—The necessity of enquiring if human nature be one, or consists of different species—The same rules of philosophizing to be observed in moral as in natural philosophy—The importance of the science—Its difficulties, and the cause of them.*

PHILOSOPHY is an investigation of the constitution and laws of nature, both in the physical and moral world, as far as the powers of the human mind, unaided by the lights of revelation, are competent to discover them. In this enquiry we can proceed, with any reasonable prospect of arriving at truth, only by a careful and extensive induction of facts, whence we may hope ultimately, to attain to some acquaintance with the princi-



ples and causes of things. In the physical world, a minute and patient observation of the phenomena of nature, and, in the moral world, of the conduct of men, individually, and in their various social relations, is the only method by which we can gain any certain knowledge of their constitution, or of the springs and laws of their action respectively. We are, evidently, not endued with powers by which we can immediately inspect their essence, and discern their intimate structure, and thence be able, antecedently to experience, to anticipate the effects of their action, either singly, or in any possible combination. In order to understand the works of an infinite mind, and to draw from them any useful information, a being so limited in his capacities as man, should be contented simply to observe their effects with attention, and carefully to remark how those effects are varied in different situations and connexions, whence only we can form general rules concerning their operation in all similar and analogous cases. The wisdom of modern science has justly excluded from philosophy all hypotheses, by which the operations of nature are attempted to be conjecturally explained. Indeed, when a mind so feeble in its powers, and circumscribed in its views, as that of man, attempts to explain by conjecture the infinite plans of the Deity, or to unfold *a priori*, as it is called in the language of the schools, the phenomena that result from their in-

scrutable structure, it is perhaps impossible that it should not err, or that it should approach even near the truth. —Let hypothesis have antecedently formed its conjecture on any phenomenon in nature, with which experiment has since made the philosopher in some degree acquainted; as, for example, on the manner in which the eye perceives objects by the rays of the sun; or on the laws of that spark which we elicit by friction from a cylinder of glass; no man can doubt but that, before the principles of optics were discovered, and the structure of the eye laid open by anatomical dissection; or before the science of electricity was explained, ten thousand conjectures might have been framed, and all should have been almost infinitely and equally distant from the actual fact. Experience, therefore, and a diligent and attentive observation of the course of nature, and of the actions of mankind in every variety of situation in which they may be placed, is the only legitimate mean of attaining a competent knowledge of the laws of either the material, or the moral world. But when experience has once conducted us from effects up to their causes, we may, in analogous cases, be reconducted by the same means, from causes with which we have become acquainted, to the effects which may be expected in known situations, to result from them. For such conclusions, the constancy observed in nature affords us just grounds. We are taught by ex-

perience to expect a perfect uniformity of action in each cause, when placed precisely in the same circumstances ; and from similar causes, in resembling situations, to look for similar effects. This tendency to uniform results we impute to some power in the cause, which, being essential to it, and belonging to its very constitution, will always operate in the same way, when not vitiated from within, or obstructed by some obstacle from without. We pronounce it to be a necessary consequence of a law of nature ; and the regularity of action which obtains throughout all parts of the universal system, we ascribe to the uniform operation of established laws.—It is on this ground that we study human nature in our own hearts ; and that history may be regarded as a volume of moral experiment,

Philosophy is divided into two great branches,—the natural and the moral. Nature, taken in its utmost extent, embraces the whole compass of things in the universe, whether corporeal or spiritual, physical or moral. But, in this division of the science, natural philosophy consists in an investigation of the constitution and laws of body ; moral philosophy in an investigation of the constitution and laws of mind, especially as it is endued with the power of voluntary action, and is susceptible of the sentiments of duty and obligation. Its chief end is to ascertain the principles, and the rule of duty, and to

regulate conduct, both in our individual capacities, and in our social relations, whether domestic or civil. This is the object of our present enquiries. But in order to attain this end in any considerable degree of perfection, it will be necessary to enter into many important disquisitions concerning the constituent principles, the natural tendencies, and the moral relations of that sensible, rational, and moral being, who is the subject of duty.

In the universe there may be many orders of spirit, as there are many modifications of matter. We are, however, acquainted with two only; God, and the human soul. And our knowledge of the former, which must necessarily be extremely imperfect, from the infinite distance at which we are placed from him, must be derived principally from our knowledge of the latter. But, although our conceptions of the divine mind must be far from reaching the perfection of his nature, it is important that, as far as the weakness of man is capable of comprehending the infinity of God, the ideas which we frame of him should be consistent with truth. For, the duty of all rational beings must have a reference to his will. And our nature having been formed by his almighty power, can then only be perfect, when it is evidently conformed to his design in our creation.

The science of moral philosophy, therefore, begins in the study of the human mind—its sensations, perceptions,

and generally, its means of acquiring knowledge—its sentiments, dispositions and affections, and generally, its principles of action or enjoyment—its present state, and relations to other beings—its future hopes and fears. From an attentive examination of its various principles and powers, and from carefully remarking their operations either singly, or in combination with others, we may at length form a rational judgment of what man was intended, by his creator, to be, and thence deduce the law of his duty.

In this investigation, as has already been suggested, it is necessary to follow the method of analysis, and to reason from particular facts, collected by extensive and careful observation, to the general laws of the human mind. It occurs here as a natural enquiry, what is a *law* of nature? And, by what process are its laws to be collected?—The essential nature of things in which the laws of their action are founded, it has been already acknowledged, cannot be intuitively known to the weakness of the human understanding. But their laws, as far as is requisite for the purposes of science, may be understood from a less perfect knowledge. The uniformity of a multitude of facts, arising from the action of any subject, indicates some principle or power in that subject, which, tho' unknown in its essence, we conclude, from our experience of the constancy of nature, will, in similar cir-

cumstances, always operate in the same way. This uniformity of effect, or rather, perhaps, the unknown but constant cause on which it depends, is denominated a *law of nature*. And the several classes of uniformities, which science has discovered in the system of the universe, are consequently ascribed to so many natural laws.\* And when any fact or phenomenon occurs to our observation, it is said to be accounted for, or explained, as far as the human intellect is capable of explaining, or accounting for it, when it can be referred to some common and known class of similar facts.

This observation may be illustrated by a familiar example. The electric fluid, like all the other principles of nature, is, in its essence, unknown. But the uniform effects resulting from it, in a vast variety of situations, are now well understood from repeated experiment. They are therefore denominated the laws of electricity. We wish then to explain the phenomenon of lightning. And by applying to it the same tests as to the principle of electricity, with the effects of which we are better acquainted, we find precisely the same results. We esteem it, therefore, accounted for, as far as human sagacity

\* For instance, the uniformities which we observe in magnetism, in the refractions of light, or in the passions and emotions of the human heart under the various circumstances naturally calculated to excite them, are called the laws of magnetism, of refraction, &c.

can explain it, not by revealing its essential nature which is inscrutable, but simply by referring it to the class of electric phenomena.

In the moral world, when we perceive, in all nations, that a bare inspection of the works of nature has led mankind to the acknowledgment of a Supreme Power which presides over the order of the whole, we justly infer that the belief of the existence of God is to be ascribed to an original law of our rational and moral nature. The parental affection, in like manner, and the social inclinations of our nature, which, in all nations and ages, and in similar circumstances, we see operating with great uniformity, we pronounce to be natural laws of our being.

Many resembling facts, therefore, indicate a law of nature. If any new fact, with which we have not before been acquainted, occurs to our observation, if it is found, in its properties, to coincide with any class of phenomena already known, it is supposed to be accounted for by referring it to that class. Otherwise it is called a solitary fact, which, of course, is left open to future enquiry.

Thus, in the moral, as in the natural world, by an attentive induction of facts, that is, by observing the operations of the human mind in every variety of situation in which it may be placed, in solitude, or in society, in prosperity, or in adversity, in its various relations,

to reator, or our fellow men, or in positions in which all the passions may be successively called into action, which observation may, with propriety, be stiled moral experiment, we arrive at length, at a knowledge of the laws of our moral nature.

The mind of man being intimately united with a corporeal system, receiving all its original informations, through the organs of the senses, and being in all its perceptions and emotions affected by the state of the body, this union is not to be neglected in the study of the mind. On the other hand, the reciprocal influences of these great component parts of human nature ought carefully to be regarded, that, both in our moral and physical studies, we may be able to discriminate the effects of their mutual action. By this means many false, and visionary notions which have sometimes mingled themselves with both morals and religion might be corrected. And superstition, particularly, which derives its gloomy, or fantastic reveries chiefly from certain bodily impressions,\* would lose its principal hold upon a weak imagination.

In entering on this science it will be requisite to examine if human nature be radically one under all the

\* Of this some examples will hereafter be given in the 7th lecture.



various appearances which it exhibits in different portions of the globe; or if, according to the opinion of certain philosophers, it is divided into different species which, in many points, possess only a faint resemblance of one another. If the human race is to be regarded as an assemblage of different species, that course of moral experiment, which has been already recommended as the necessary mean of perfecting the science, would be fruitless. No certain and universal theory of duty could result from it. The laws of moral conduct, which we might collect from the most careful examination of our own nature, could not be applied with truth to those tribes of men who should be of foreign species. Not only would the principles of morals and religion deduced from human nature, as it exists at present in any nation, be different from those of every other people, but, at any future period in the same nation, by reason of the infinite migrations and mixtures of mankind, all past experience might be rendered uncertain, and all rules confounded, in proportion as the several races should be intermixed and blended. On the other hand, if the whole family of mankind be found to be radically one, notwithstanding the various external appearances under which it is presented to us in different climates, the same general laws of duty may be applied to them all, subject only to such modifications as shall be found to arise out of their re-

spective states of society, or the divers of their mutual relations.

In the philosophy of man the same rules ought to be observed which have been followed in natural philosophy ever since the age of the great Newton, with so much advantage to the science.

1. "That no law should be admitted on hypothesis but should rest solely on an induction of facts." Some reasons for this rule have been already assigned; particularly the feebleness of the human mind, and the contracted sphere within which its observation is necessarily limited. It is but lately since the science of moral philosophy has been freed from the disgrace and embarrassment of hypothesis at its very entrance, in its enquiry concerning the manner in which we become acquainted with external objects by sensation. It was first laid down as a principle, that no material being can act where it is not. The question then arose how we perceive objects at a distance? To solve this difficulty recourse was had to the following hypothesis;—that every sensible object is continually emitting from its own body some images of itself in every direction, which the ancient philosophers denominated *ideas*, or *sensible species*, and that these aerial, gaseous, or almost spiritual images impinging upon the organ of sense communicated, by that

impulse, a perception of their subject; or rather a ground of inferring its existence, from the vivacity of the impression. Such was the doctrine of Aristotle, and from him of the whole peripatetic school. And there are some vestiges of it even in the philosophy of Locke, of which Berkeley and Hume availing themselves denied the existence of the material subject altogether, as being wholly unnecessary.\* But let the mind be relieved from the philosophic delirium of hypothesis, and form her judgments on experience and fact, interpreted by plain common sense, and we must pronounce a totally different decision. Whatever medium, in the opinion of these philosophers, nature may employ to connect the object with the organ of sense, whether image, or idea, or any other sensible phantasm, it is, beyond a doubt, the object itself, not its idea, which is discerned by the sense, any image or phantasm in the case, being either unknown, or unper-

\* If, say they, according to the peripatetic hypothesis, or the metaphysic of Locke, the principles of which were generally acknowledged in the time of these philosophers, it be only the images or ideas of objects that we perceive, and not the objects themselves, what ground can there be to infer their existence? Ideas, it is confessed, may be impressed on a lively imagination without the presence of any external substance. And, agreeably to the scheme of Mr Hume, the vivacity of the idea is the only criterion of truth. The reality of the material world, therefore, perishes by the fairest inference, since, according to the confession of its friends, it is not the object of our perceptions.

ceived, and at the time wholly unthought of. An idea is merely a conception of the fancy, or the reminiscence of an absent object.

2. Another rule is, "that laws collected from an ample and accurate induction of facts should be deemed universal, till other facts occur to invalidate, or limit the conclusions which have been drawn from them."—Unless we could rely on this rule, the progress of science would be arrested almost at its commencement. Few are the conclusions which we could frame if it required a knowledge of facts strictly universal before we could admit a general consequence from induction. And the known analogy of nature is a sufficient and satisfactory ground of those general inferences embraced within the rule. On this foundation solely we build our knowledge of the constituent principles of human nature, the laws both of physical and moral action in man, and the acknowledged maxims of society, domestic and civil.

3. In the third place, "laws founded on a partial induction of facts should not be extended beyond the limits to which they are certainly known to apply."—The neglect of this rule is one of the principal causes of national antipathies, and of the bigotry of religious sects. From a few facts imperfectly observed a rash and unfair judgment is pronounced on a whole party, or a whole

nation. With the same confident precipitancy have we sometimes heard the natives of Africa, who have been contemplated only in a state of savagism or of slavery, pronounced to be destitute of the best faculties of human nature; and the American continent judged to be unfriendly equally to corporeal vigor, and to mental talent. It is a rule, especially, by which we should rigorously examine the narratives of travellers, and of those writers who profess to exhibit comparative estimates of the characters of foreign nations, so seldom have they an opportunity of observing the interior of their manners; and so much more rarely do they possess the talent necessary to trace the causes of what they observe with philosophic accuracy, or the inclination to represent them with candor.

4. A fourth rule is, "that similar appearances should, because of the uniformity of nature, be referred, as far as possible, to the same causes."—On this rule we interpret the actions of men in all their various relations in different portions of the globe; and we find them to be the same as fathers, brothers, sons, as the members of a family, or of civil society.—We discern but one race throughout the whole.—To take another example from a peculiar department of our nature.—The belief of spectres, of the feats of witchcraft, and magic, and of those little tricky, or mischievous sprites, which are

found among the traditionary tales of the vulgar in most of the modern countries in Europe, ought to be ascribed to the same principle, the force of a timid and ardent imagination unregulated by the science of nature, which anciently filled Egypt with magicians, and Assyria with soothsayers, and peopled the hills, the streams, and the skies of Greece with the objects of a superstitious veneration.

5. The last rule which I mention is, "that the testimony of our senses, and of all our simple perceptions, ought to be admitted as true, and no ulterior evidence be required of the reality, or the nature of the facts which they confirm."—The informations of the senses are intended to be ultimate. They are perfectly simple, and cannot, by any artifice of language, be rendered more obvious or clear. They are the first elements of our knowledge; and the only acquaintance which we can have with the nature of their objects is conveyed in the impression which they make upon the organ of perception.—This rule is of the more importance, because philosophers, of no inferior name, have appeared in modern times, as well as in the earlier ages of science, who have denied the certainty of our senses, and have reasoned concerning their operations with such excessive subtlety as to confound the most obvious and natural consequences resulting from their informations. While they

have filled the rational and intellectual sphere with images, ideas, and sensible species, and other such shadowy forms as substitutes for a material world, they have utterly denied the reality of body. Others carrying their temerity still farther, have denied the reality both of body and spirit ; and have equally reduced the physical and the moral world to a mere train of fugitive, and unsubstantial ideas.

The object of the science of moral philosophy, as it is designed to be treated in this system, is not so much a minute and extensive detail of particular duties, which, from their multitude, and the innumerable modifications to which they are subject from the ever varying state of society, and the mutable situations and connexions in which men may be placed, would be too voluminous, as to propose such general *principles* as may enable a rational and reflecting mind to deduce the point of duty for itself, on every case as it arises in practice.

It is, manifestly, a science of primary dignity and importance, as it is intended to unfold the principles of human nature, and bring us more intimately acquainted with man, who is evidently the first object which deserves our consideration in this world, and for whom the world seems chiefly to have been formed. Thence it proceeds to investigate the laws of morality and duty in the various relations of life, and to cultivate the heart to virtue,

which gives the supreme value to this, and to every science. Man it contemplates in his different powers and principles of action,—it considers him in his social capacities, as a member of a family,—as associated in a political community,—as a subject of civil government,—as a citizen of the world. It unfolds his infinitely important relations to the Deity ; and endeavors to open his view on those immortal hopes which give the chief, if not the only value to rational existence, and add the greatest force to the obligations of duty and virtue.—The dignity and happiness of individuals, the prosperity of states, and the order and happiness of the world, are intimately connected with the practical knowledge of those truths at the cultivation and improvement of which this science aims. And, from the commencement of learning, it has occupied the profoundest attention and enquiry of the philosophic part of mankind in every age.

At the first view of this subject we are naturally inclined to conceive that the science of morals must be as clear and definite in its principles, and as obvious and certain in its conclusions, as they are important to the best interests of mankind. It seems not unreasonable to expect that the foundations of duty should be laid open even to a slight attention of the inquisitive mind. Yet, it is certain that no science has been embarrassed with greater,



or more numerous controversies. To this effect various causes have contributed their influence. Not only is it liable to obscurity and doubt, in common with other sciences, arising from the imbecility of human reason, from the love of hypothesis, and the vanity of system, from the difficulty of distinguishing many of the nicer operations of our own minds, and often from defect of patience and attention in examining and discriminating the subjects and the facts presented in it to our observation ; but it is exposed to causes of peculiar obscurity and mistake arising from the general depravity and corruption of human nature. To whatever source that corruption may have been imputed by various writers, there can be no doubt of its existence. The disorders of the world attest it ; and every man perceives its principles, more or less powerfully, operating in his own heart. When incorporated by habit, into the moral state and affections of the soul, it must necessarily impart, in the same proportion, a false bias in judging of the general principles of the moral law ; and especially of those particular details of the law which come most immediately in collision with the passions and manners of the individual.

Perhaps no philosopher has his judgment wholly exempted from some bias to modify the practical precepts of the moral law, according to his own peculiar character and habits, which cannot be done without extending

in the same degree, an oblique influence to the theory of morals. It is, however, the sincere aim, and the gradual tendency of true philosophy to correct the errors of prejudice, and to dissipate the mists that shed themselves over the mind, in consequence of the prevalence of any dominant affection or passion. Much may be effected by candid, patient, and dispassionate enquiry in accomplishing this desirable end. It may be presumption to expect to arrive at truth on all the subjects of our research with complete and unhesitating conviction; on many, perhaps, we ought to rest satisfied with only probable evidence; yet, we ought ever to bear it in mind that, in our philosophical enquiries, we have as much reason to avoid the dangers of a weak and suspicious scepticism, as of a bold and positive dogmatism.

## LECTURE II.

## CONTENTS.

*Topics to be treated of in examining the principles of human nature.—The principal distinctions between the form and figure of man and that of other animals.—The distinctions which subsist between the various tribes of mankind consistent with the identity of the species, the ascertaining of which is necessary to a just philosophy of human nature.—The causes of their varieties reducible to the heads of climate—the state of society—and manner of living.—Illustrations of each of these, particularly in the complexion,—the hair,—and some peculiarities in the feature, and limbs.—The effect of moral and intellectual causes, especially on the form of the bones of the head.*

BEFORE we contemplate man as an individual, and examine the constituent principles of his nature, I shall first take a comparative view of him in relation to the other species of animals upon this earth among which he evidently holds the first rank; and enter on the important and necessary inquiry concerning the identity of the human race.—I shall next consider his prolific powers; or his faculties of continuing and multiplying his species;

with some reflections on the best means of augmenting the numbers of mankind, with reference, particularly, to the population of states.—I shall take a view of him, in the third place, as a social being, pointing out the respective forms of association under which the race is disposed to collect itself, so different from those in which other gregarious animals are found to assemble.—And, lastly, I shall consider his capacities of improvement, in which he so far transcends every other species of animals; under which head shall be embraced the structure of language, the invention of arts, and the origin and progress of science.

Man is distinguished from all the other inhabitants of this globe by the erectness of his form, by a noble and commanding expression of countenance, and by an infinite number of muscles and articulations in the structure of his limbs, which adapt them to an infinitely greater variety of easy movements, and useful purposes, than those of any other animal, particularly in the nicer operations of the arts, without which they could neither have been practised, nor invented. The erectness of his figure has been supposed, by some philosophers, to be the result of education, and to have grown into fashion in the progress of social refinement, rather than to have been the natural consequence of his original formation. But the whimsical speculations of a few philosophers,

who have chosen to depart so far from the opinions of mankind concerning man's primitive state, have been so fantastic as hardly to merit refutation, and have hitherto attracted on themselves more ridicule for their folly, than reputation for their ingenuity.\* The erect posture is evidently the most natural to man after the imbecility of childhood is past; and anatomists profess to demonstrate that the figure of his limbs, and all the articulations of his joints, were formed only for that position.

The expression of the human countenance, in the next place, is incomparably more various than that of any other animal. Such is the mysterious union and sympathy between the body and the soul, that there is not an emotion or thought which passes through the mind that does not paint some image of itself on the fine and delicate lines of the countenance. Expression, in a low degree, belongs to other animals. We see them brighten with joy, and gambol with pleasure; they languish in sickness, and writhe with pain. Their eyes sparkle with

\* Among the most ridiculous of those opinions, perhaps, is that which supposes man to have been originally an inhabitant of the ocean, and that, after frequently crawling on shore to gather provision, and to bask in the sun, like the sea calf, his shoulder fins, at length, extended into arms, and those of the tail into legs and feet.—*Porter on the original state of man.* Lord Monboddo's centaurs certainly did not depart so far from truth and nature.

love, or flash with rage; and sometimes the tear of distress is seen to roll down their cheeks. To animals of their own species their powers of expression, both by their looks, and, especially, by their tones, must, doubtless, be much greater than can be discerned by man, who possesses so little knowledge of those natural signs by which they communicate their wants, or their pleasures, to one another, and so little sympathy with their internal feelings. But, in the delicate and flexible human countenance there is hardly the slightest movement of the soul which has not its external character or symbol; so that the language of looks and gestures is commonly more impressive, and often carries in it greater truth, than that of words. The analysis of mute expression has been known anciently to be carried to a high degree of perfection; and is said to be, in many countries, at present, not unsuccessfully studied. Almost all critics since the age of Cicero have taken notice of a friendly and liberal contention between him and Roscius, to try which of them could express a sentiment with the greatest variety and force, the one by words, or the other by action.—The natural powers of expression in the human countenance are, however, greatly influenced by the existing state of society, and are along with the refinement of its manners, susceptible of extraordinary degrees of cultivation. That dull and inflexible gloom and vacancy of

countenance which distinguishes savage life, is the necessary consequence of vacuity of thought. But the variety of ideas and emotions continually arising in polished society, communicates to the countenance a habit of quick and various flexibility, which renders it capable of painting suddenly upon the features every thought that passes through the mind.—But as society again degenerates into vicious refinement, and multiplies the objects of the passions, it encreases also the number of those emotions which men find it prudent to disguise or conceal. Here, in consequence, the variety of natural expression requires to be subjected to considerable restraints. And fashion, in which there is little sincerity, undertaking to prescribe all the forms which regulate the intercourse of men, a tasteless, and insipid uniformity of complaisance is spread over the face of society; and the power of natural, but of diversified, expression, is confined to scenes of strong and irresistible emotion, chiefly of joy, or grief, and to the art of the mimic.

The human frame, in its various members, and in the symmetry of the whole, exhibits remarkably pleasing and elegant proportions; and the exquisite adaptation of its articulations and muscles to an infinite variety of delicate and useful operations, plainly indicates the intention of the creator to assist the invention and cultiva-

tion of all the arts which contribute either to the necessary purposes of life, or to convenience and ornament.

The eminent advantages of our nature above that of other animals seem, on a superficial view, and on first impression, to be balanced by proportional disadvantages in its original imbecility, its innumerable wants, and its long dependence upon the care of parents, evils to which the young of those animals seem not to be equally exposed. Yet, a closer inspection will demonstrate, on the other hand, that these apparent disadvantages contribute eventually to the felicity and perfection of human nature. Do not the nakedness and softness of his skin, and the extreme delicacy of his organization, promote the fineness and softness of his feelings, and the quickness of his perceptions; just as the finest chords vibrate to the gentlest pulses of the air, and emit the sweetest sounds? Do not his wants quicken his ingenuity, and the poignancy of all his sensations tend to awaken his moral sensibilities, and to aid the transition of his benevolent sympathies? And, finally, does not his long dependence upon the care of parents, and the tedious period of their solicitudes and pains, contribute to strengthen the reciprocal ties, and sweeten the mutual endearments, of the domestic affections, and thereby lay the firmest foundations of the order and happiness of civil society?—What seemed at first, therefore, to be a peculiar disadvantage



on the side of human nature, is discovered, on more mature reflection, to be a mean of carrying its faculties eventually to the highest pitch of improvement, and building, on their improvement, the felicity of mankind. By this order of things, as will, hereafter, be more particularly seen, our beneficent creator has evidently intended to promote both the intellectual powers, and the virtuous habits and affections of the species.

One important distinction of the human from all other animal natures requires to be treated of at greater extent. The peculiar fineness and delicacy of its organization render it easily susceptible of impression, and consequently of considerable varieties in its appearance, from the action of many external causes; while, at the same time, the flexibility of the human system is such as to enable it to endure these changes without materially injuring the principle of life. The residence of most animals is circumscribed within narrower limits upon the globe than that of man. Those which are found in greatest perfection in the torrid latitudes, can hardly exist within the regions of extreme cold; and the reverse takes place in those animals which seem designed by their nature for the colder climes. Man is capable of enduring the temperature of every climate. His complexion and figure suffer considerable changes by its action, in conjunction with other causes, particularly his various

modes of living, and the various states of society in which he exists; but the essential principles of his nature appear, under every change, to remain the same. The discussion of this question will form the chief subject of the remaining part of this lecture.

I have already suggested the necessity of establishing the unity of the human species, in order to the universal application of the science of morals, either to regulate, or to form a just judgment of the conduct of men in different states of society. For this purpose it may be laid down as a maxim, that, if the varieties in form and aspect which exist among mankind in different regions of the globe, can be accounted for from the operation of known physical or moral causes, on the supposition of the original identity of the race, it will be contrary to the genuine rules of philosophy, and the acknowledged simplicity of nature, to seek for the ground of these differences in an original diversity of species.

It will be necessary, for this end, to pass under review the principal varieties in the aspect of mankind, which are found to exist in different portions of the earth, and to explain them, if possible, by the action of natural and known causes; presuming that, if the most important can be thus explained, all inferior differences may be more certainly accounted for on the same, or on

will readily apply a similar train of reasoning to explain the rest.

The general causes, then, after which we are enquiring, may be reduced, I presume, to the following heads—climate—the manner of living, and the state of society. By climate is meant principally, the degree of heat, or cold, which prevails in any region, with such other influences in the earth or atmosphere, as immediately result from these; which are usually proportioned to the distance of any place from the sun. Latitude, however, is not an exact measure of the temperature of countries, which is greatly modified by the nature of the soil, the elevation of the surface, the circumfluence, or intersection of great bodies of water, and many other circumstances. That climate possesses a powerful influence on the complexion of nations, may be inferred from the effect of the solar rays upon the human skin in our own mild and temperate latitude. Compare the swarthy hand of the sailor, the day-laborer, or of any of those persons whose occupations habitually expose them to their action in the open air, with the delicate fairness of such as, from their rank and fortune, are constantly shielded from their influences, and the effect becomes conspicuous and striking. If, instead of the partial exposure to which they are subjected, and those conveniencies by which they are at present sheltered from the worst effects

of the climate, they were exposed naked, and unhoused, like men in a savage condition, to the full force of its action, how much greater would be the effect? How much greater still, if, instead of the short duration of our summer heats, they were continued throughout the whole year with the same intensity? And if, to all, we add the ardor of the torrid zone, to which there is nothing in the temperate latitudes to be compared, we may easily conceive that the blackness of the African hue is not greater than ought to be expected from the force and continuance of the cause.

But, besides the discoloration produced by the direct rays of the sun, naturalists inform us that the effect of a torrid climate is very powerful on the action of the liver, that great laboratory of bile in the human system. This secretion is greatly augmented likewise by the superabundance of putrid miasmata evolved in such regions from stagnant moisture and decaying vegetable substances. From whatever cause it is increased in quantity, it is known, in the same degree, to heighten the discoloration of the skin: for bile, although it puts on a yellowish appearance while it is confined within the system, yet immediately assumes a black hue as soon as it is exposed to the air; which in a degree takes place when it arrives in the circulation at the surface of the body. Dr Blumenback, a famous German chymist, thus

delivers his opinion upon this subject, founded upon repeated and accurate experiment: "The bile, says he, I have found to contain a greater quantity of carbon in its composition than any other animal substance, except oil. When, from any cause, therefore, it is thrown into the circulation in any undue proportion, arriving, in its progress, at the surface of the body, the hydrogenic principle in which it swims, having a stronger attraction or affinity with the oxygene of the atmosphere than the carbon, detaches itself, in the act of perspiration, from that substance, which, being consequently precipitated in the cellular membrane of the skin, contributes there to form the dark complexion of fervid, and especially of tropical climates."—Many other causes, besides extreme heat, contribute to create a superabundance of this secretion, particularly, poverty of diet, filthiness in the habits of living, and in the general manners of a people, or whatever tends greatly to debilitate, or exhaust the corporeal system. In whatever degree it prevails, it is proportionally followed by this discolored effect. Hence, perhaps, arises the dark hue of the Laplanders, Samoides, and other inhabitants of the arctic regions. The constitution, in those extreme climates, is overstrained by the intensity of the cold, and exhausted by the scantiness, coarseness, and poverty of the food on which the half-famished people are obliged to subsist.—Many of

the preceding causes, necessarily concurring in the condition of all savages, may be the reason why men in this state of society, are always of a very dark hue even in temperate latitudes.—But whether philosophers, in attempting to explain the causes of color in the human skin, have justly interpreted nature or not, we have before our eyes incontrovertible examples which demonstrate the power of climate in the production of this effect. Not to speak of the general progression of color from the high temperate latitudes to the heats of the equator; or of the complexional zones of Arabia, or India, the nation of the Jews who are known to be descended from one family, little mixed with any other people, furnish a fact that, one would think, should be decisive upon this subject. They are dispersed through every country in the world from Great-Britain to India, and in each region, are marked with the common complexion of the natives; fair in Britain and Germany, swarthy in Spain and Portugal, olive in Syria, and black in India.

Having made these few observations on the varieties which exist among mankind in the complexion of the skin, I shall, with the same brevity, endeavor to point out the influence of climate on other varieties, which appear in the figure and proportions of the several limbs of the human body.—The Esquimaux, the Laplanders, the Samoides, and, in general, the most northern tribes

of Tartars, have the head and breast large, the neck short, the hands, the feet, and the eyes small. These seem to be natural effects of the intense and perpetual cold which reigns in those regions. It restrains the freedom of the growth and expansion of those limbs which are farthest removed from the centre of warmth and circulation in the body. The size of the feet and hands, therefore, will necessarily be diminished, while the breast and the head, which receive the most forcible impulse of the blood, will be proportionably enlarged. The expansion of the head and breast diminishes the apparent length of the neck. This circumstance, connected with the habit which naturally prevails in those rigorous climates, of habitually raising the shoulders to protect the neck from the uncomfortable effects of intense frost, will account for the appearance of those wretched savages, who seem as if their heads rested almost on the top of their breasts, or were even sunk below their shoulders. That such a fixed habit of the body should be the effect of the constant action of extreme cold ought not to be surprising to those who know how the form of certain limbs may be changed by the application of proper machinery, or even by the voluntary efforts of young persons continued through a sufficient period of time, under the direction of a skilful master of attitudes. A particular habit of body, or disposition of the features constantly

repeated, in consequence of the unremitting constriction of cold, becomes, at length, incorporated into the system, and gives the form to the person, and the lineaments to the features, more or less strongly marked, as far as the cause is found to operate. This observation may be extended, by analogy, to explain many other traits of personal, or national physiognomy besides those already mentioned. Thus the harsh features of a Tartar are the natural result of the corrugations, and distortions created by the climate. And that silly and idiotic countenance which we frequently observe in the wretched natives of Africa, seems to be a compound effect of the pain, and the faintness created by the intense rays of a vertical sun immediately beating on the head exposed to their stroke without covering. This observation is corroborated by a remark made by Mr Volney when contemplating the head of the Sphinx in Egypt. It exhibits, he supposes, a type of the countenance of the ancient inhabitants of the country, who resembled more the natives of tropical Africa than the present population, which is a degenerate compound of Greeks, Romans, Asiatics, and Turks. And the expression of the countenance, he adds, in the contraction and wrinkles of the forehead, and the eyes, the elevation of the cheek, and drawing of the brows, and other particulars, presents a picture of the effects of a fervid sun upon the head, when men give



way to their uneasy feelings. It represents precisely, the state of contraction which our faces assume when strongly affected by heat.\*

One other peculiarity of the Africans deserves to be mentioned, which is their hair resembling wool. Universal experience demonstrates that climate has a powerful effect upon the hair, fur, or wool of all animals to render it coarse or fine, sparse or thick, according to the temperature of the region; an effect which seems directed by the creator with a most benevolent intention for their comfort. A like benevolent care appears to be exercised towards the natives of this fervid zone. The covering of their head is a substance that is, properly, neither wool, nor hair, but somewhat between them, which is more comfortable to the head than either. It is sufficient to protect the brain from the intense ardor of the sun, and does not, like hair, imbibe the perspirable moisture from the skin, which would render it, in that hot region, extremely uneasy to the feeling, and probably unsafe to the health. This excrescence takes its color and form from the properties of that secretion in the skin from which it derives its nutriment. That the curl or nap of the hair depends in a great degree upon this cause is rendered the more probable by the appearance

\* Travels in Egypt, page 49—Dublin edition, 1788.

which it exhibits on the chin, the armpits, and other parts of the human body. Whatever be the nutriment of the hair, it would seem, from the strong and offensive smell of the African negro, to be combined with some gas, or fluid of a very volatile and ardent nature. A similar odour is perceived to issue from the armpits of many white persons, and, in a slight degree, from all who are not nicely attentive to personal purity; and a like effect is visible on the hair that grows on that part. The evaporation of a volatile gas rendering the surface quickly dry, and disposed to contract, while the centre continues distended, will necessarily produce an involution of the hair. Viscid and glutinous matters, such as those about the chin, tend to a similar result. The peculiar odour of the African black seems to indicate the union, in that hot climate, of sulphur with hydrogen gas, or inflammable air, and perhaps an unusual proportion of phosphorus. Certain it is, however, that the strong fœtor of the African negro is gradually becoming less offensive in his descendants in America; in those especially who are accustomed to observe great particularity and cleanliness in their persons; and, in the same degree, the close nap of their wool is beginning to be relaxed.

But whatever be the cause of the woolly appearance of this excrecence in the Africans, there are several examples to prove that it depends on the qualities of that sub-

stance, lodged in the cells of the skin, which is the nutriment of the hair, and creates their carbonic complexion. I shall produce only the instance of a negro in Maryland which is recorded in the *Medical Repository* of New-York, and by Dr Barton of Philadelphia, and whom I have myself seen and examined, who, about the age of forty, lost his black color by degrees, and, in a few years, became a perfect white man. His whiteness was not of that palid and diseased hue which distinguishes the Albino race, but exhibited that pure and healthful complexion which is seen in the ordinary class of Anglo-American laborers. In this man, in proportion as the black color forsook his skin, and the white extended itself over his head and body, wherever there had been wool, it entirely disappeared, and gave place to a fine straight hair, almost of silky softness.

But for the explanation of the causes of many other varieties in the appearance of nations, I must take the liberty of referring those who are curious to investigate the subject, to the work already mentioned. I shall not here introduce any of the principles, which are there illustrated at large, tending to shew the effects of the state of society upon the aspect of the human countenance. Only remarking, that, under the head of the *state of society*, are comprehended diet, clothing, lodging, manners, government, arts, religion, agricultural im-

provements, commercial pursuits, habits of thinking, and ideas all kinds naturally arising out of this state, infinite in number and variety. If each of these causes be admitted to possess, as undoubtedly it does, a small influence in forming the character of the countenance, the different combinations, and results of the whole must necessarily be considerable ; and, united with the effects of climate will afford sufficient principles on which to account for all the varieties which exist among mankind.

Many writers who acknowledge that the soft and fleshy parts of the system are susceptible of great changes by the influence of climate, and other causes that have been mentioned, contend that the bones, being more firm in their texture, and less liable to the impressions of external causes, contain more certain indications of diversity of species among different tribes.—It is well known to physiologists, however, that, in infancy and youth, before the bones have attained their firmest consistency, these solid substances often undergo considerable alterations in their figure from the operation of very minute causes. Let me take a single but interesting example from the figure of the head.\*

On the form of this important part of the constitution, besides the climatical influences, or the extraneous ac-

\* Essay on figure and complexion of human species, page 120, &c.

eidents to which it may be exposed, every action of every muscle, in any way affected by the thoughts and passions of the mind, is calculated to make some impression. And, although the separate impressions may be insensible, yet the accumulated result of an infinite number of the slightest touches becomes very perceptible in a course of time. Nor is the softness of muscular action a sufficient objection against the reality of this fact. What can be softer in its action than a drop of water falling from the height of a few inches, or even of a single inch? Yet, in time, it will wear a cavity in the hardest marble. What can be more tender than the young herb just sprouting from the seed? Yet, although the earth that covers it may be pressed down, and beaten hard, we see it, by the gentle impulses of its expanding fibres, and circulating juices, gradually swell, and at length break through the incumbent crust. Shall we deny, then, that the passions, which often strongly agitate the mind, nay, that each emotion, each thought, by affecting the muscles that give expression to the countenance, and varying their tension, and, consequently, their pressure on different parts of the bony base of the head, may also affect its figure? From these and similar facts some great physiologists have imagined that the figure of the skull, with its various protuberances and indentations, affords a criterion of no inconsiderable certainty by which to

judge of the intellectual powers and moral dispositions of men.} These ideas have, perhaps, been pushed too far by some ingenious men. But we may, at least, be justified in affirming that the various strictures and relaxations of the muscles about the head, produced by the infinitely diversified actions of thought and passion, will, in time, leave certain impressions affecting the exterior form of the skull. At the same time, the brain, the immediate organ of all the emotions of the soul, will, by its dilations and contractions, contribute in some degree, to mould the interior cavity in which it is embraced. On the other hand, the original figure of this receptacle of the brain in different persons, by giving it scope in some, for a more ample expansion, and a freer action, or, in others, by compressing it, in some parts of its orb, and thereby restricting the regularity, or freedom of its motions, may affect the operations of the mind, and thus lay a foundation in the organization and structure of the head, for the existence and display of particuler intellectual, or moral excellencies or defects. The original figure of the skull, therefore, may have an influence, not inconsiderable, on the developement and exercise of certain passions, and affections of the mind, and on its peculiar powers of intellect, or imagination; and, on the contrary, the habitual exercise of these powers, or indulgence of these passions, especially in the early periods of

life, may reciprocally affect the figure even of that solid cell in which the brain, the immediate organ of the mental actions, is contained.

From the preceding observations, if they are founded in nature, and fact, we are fairly entitled to infer, that some climates, and some states of society, and modes of living, by varying, in a less or greater degree, the form of the head, that organ which, by its figure, necessarily affects the operations of thought, are more or less favorable than others to certain exertions of the mental powers. And we may infer further, that, after a people have long cultivated science and the arts with success, or devoted themselves chiefly to certain occupations and pursuits, a greater general aptitude for those pursuits, or those arts, may become hereditary among their descendants, in proportion as birth has any influence on the form of the person, till other causes arise to create a total alteration of the public manners. Of both these states of the human person, the ancient and modern inhabitants of Greece may be regarded, perhaps, as affording interesting examples.

The principal objections which lie against the power of climate to change the figure and complexion of the human species, maintained in the preceding theory, are drawn from the difference which exists between the in-

habitants of the African, and those of the American, and Indian zones. To obviate them, it should be remembered, that the Indian zone being composed chiefly of water, and the American zone, owing to its rivers, and its forests, are incomparably milder in their temperature than the African. In Africa itself, the eastern side of that continent is not so strongly marked with the negro peculiarities of complexion and features as the western; which may be explained by the uncommon elevation of the Abyssinian Alps above the level of the sea, and by the continual rains which prevail there for more than half the year, and, in the next place, by the continual impulse of the trade winds from the Indian ocean on the coasts of Aian. But when those winds have travelled over that burning zone, collecting in their passage all its fires, they fall upon its western side glowing with an intensity which is unknown in any other portion of the globe.

Thus have I taken a very cursory review of the principal varieties of mankind, as they exhibit themselves in various portions of the race, and suggested a few of their most obvious causes. The whole I conclude with two observations with which I introduced this discussion. The first is, that, if the varieties of mankind can be accounted for from any known causes, physical, or moral, on the supposition of their being derived from one



original stock, it is contrary to the principles of sound philosophy to seek for a solution of them in the hypothesis of there being different original species of men.— The second is, that the proof of the identity of the race, is essential to a just philosophy of human nature.

## LECTURE III.

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ON POPULATION, OR THE POWERS OF MANKIND TO MULTIPLY THE SPECIES.

*The numbers of the people in any country can never exceed those which can be nourished by the provisions either raised within it, or introduced into it—Population dependent on the state of society—The institution of marriage—The distribution of the soil in private property—Of the necessity of fixed laws and the security of rights—Of the distribution of the territorial surface into small and equal portions—Of simplicity of manners—Of luxury—Of celibacy—The effects of different kinds of food—The rearing of horses unfriendly to population, arts and commerce—Division of arts—Barter—Money—Merchants—The question whether agriculture, or commerce be most favorable to population—Liberty and security indispensable to the most flourishing population.*

IN considering man as a species, our views shall next be turned on his longevity, and his powers of continuing, and multiplying his race; with reference particularly to the most successful means of augmenting the population of states. Death is a law of all animal natures. Such is

their organization that, independently of accidental violence, by which they may be prematurely destroyed, time, by rendering the fibres of the body rigid, must, at length, arrest all its vital actions. Man, if not the longest lived of all animals, is certainly among those which enjoy life to the most extended period. Yet, there are few examples of human life protracted beyond a century. The race is continued, like that of other animals, by succession. But, if man were, like them, to indulge himself in a vagrant concubinage, his prolific powers would be much inferior to what we observe in most of the brute animals, and, certainly, his existence would be much more unhappy than theirs. But, by entering into a state of civil society, instituting the laws of marriage, submitting to the restraints which that union requires, and making use of all the advantages which, as a social, reasonable, and moral being, he enjoys over them, the species may be almost indefinitely multiplied. Marriage, and the union of men in families, is necessary in order to fix the certain relation of children to parents, and to create to the latter both the motives, and the means of protecting and preserving them, and of so cultivating their bodies, and their minds, as to prepare them to become parents themselves, useful to their offspring, and to society.

These things being premised, if the habits of society, or the fertility of the earth were such that an easy and plentiful subsistence could be procured for every child that might be born, the natural inducements to marriage, and the prolific powers of mankind are such, that the numbers of the species might be multiplied to a degree of which we have never yet seen any example. But, when the population of any country is advanced to that state in point of numbers, that all the provision for the sustenance of human life, either spontaneously yielded by the soil, or produced by the customary habits of industry among the people, is annually consumed, it can then be no futher increased. The difficulties of maintaining a family, in a situation continually threatened with want, would discourage marriages, or actual want, if they were contracted, would render them unfruitful, or would destroy their fruit. The maximum of population, can never exceed the maximum of the provision raised within the country, or introduced into it by commerce. But in estimating the requisite quantity of provision for supporting the population of a state, we must take into the account, not merely that portion of food which is absolutely necessary for the sustentation of life, or of clothing which is barely sufficient to defend the body against the inclemency of the seasons, but that quantity and kind of both which the state of society, and

the general habits of living, have rendered customary in any country. The indulgences which custom has made general, the kind of diet, or of clothing which enter into the common habits of the people, come to be esteemed among the necessities of life. It is equally true of a state of savagism, as of a state of civilized refinement, that the population cannot exceed what can be supported by their natural, or artificial means of subsistence, according to their habits of living. If a tribe be accustomed to derive their provision wholly from the bow and the hook, their population cannot go beyond that small number which the spontaneous product of the waters and the forest can maintain. On the other hand, if certain expensive gratifications of luxury come to be included among the necessary enjoyments of a civilized people, as soon as they exceed the abilities of any particular class in the community to purchase them, marriage, and the formation of families among them, will be proportionably restrained. When, in the progress of society, therefore, the dissipations of luxury come to spread their influence through the general mass of a nation, and to invade the middling and lower as well as the highest orders, this obstruction to the great principle of population, the formation of families, will, in proportion to the degree in which it prevails, impair its population. The same effects will flow from great rudeness and unskilfulness in

the arts, especially in that of agriculture, or from great corruption of the arts, which converts them only to effeminate the morals of society, and to cherish a pernicious ostentation and expense in living.

The numbers of mankind, therefore, in any country will depend, in the first place, on the state of society to which the people have arrived. Man, in savage life, resembles the beasts of prey, which, living only upon flesh, exist rarely dispersed through the forest. When advanced, like the Tartar, to the art of taming herds, and living chiefly on their milk, along with the fruits of an imperfect agriculture, a great improvement is made in favor of human nature. But, it is in a state of civilization alone, where arts have been invented, and science cultivated, and where men are sustained principally on the products of agriculture, that the numbers, and the happiness of the race can be augmented in the highest ratio. In a state of cultivation, however, the comparative numbers of nations, after making reasonable allowance for soil and climate, must depend chiefly on those institutions which facilitate the formation, and support of families, and call forth the industry of the people ; that is, which contribute to multiply the quantity of provisions, and to bestow on every class in society, their reasonable share in the distribution of them, according

to their property in the soil, their expenditures in its improvement, or the actual labor bestowed upon it.

It is an important object of inquiry to the philosopher and the legislator, to discover those institutions which may tend most effectually to augment the population, and industry of states, so as, by the well directed labor of the people, to render the earth that beautiful and comfortable habitation which seems to have been the ultimate design of the creator in its formation. It is plainly the intention of providence to impose on man the necessity of industry, and, by this law, at once to beautify his abode, and to carry all the faculties of his nature to their highest improvement.

After the institution of marriage, which is the most effectual support of all those moral principles which form the cement of society, a wise system of property in the soil will be found to have the most beneficial operation. When the land lies in common, and is not parcelled out in individual property, it can be used only to the purposes of hunting, or of pasturage, in either of which conditions the population must necessarily be extremely small, and the improvement of the human powers be entirely arrested. But when divided in separate property, each man, obliged to resort to the cultivation of the soil for the maintenance of himself and family, feels a power-

ful interest in improving his own portion, and drawing from it the largest profit which the labor, or expense, that he is able to bestow upon it, will yield in the market.

But there are several considerations in the political state of a people which are necessary to give to land its greatest value, and to encourage the efforts, and multiply the fruits of a laborious industry. The first of these is security to each man of his rights, whether consisting in the property of the soil, or in the free and entire use of the fruits of his own labor. If there is any uncertainty in either; or if another has the power of controlling his rights, or of entering at pleasure on the profits of his labor, industry is discouraged, and improvement ceases. Fixed laws, therefore, under a wise constitution of government, are of primary importance for promoting the population of states, and augmenting the numbers of mankind.

Another consideration which particularly merits the attention of the legislator who aims at the highest ratio of population, is the importance of adopting such a system of territorial regulations as will tend to throw the land as much as possible into small, and nearly equal divisions. When distributed in large portions in the hands of a few wealthy lords, as in Poland, and in Russia, to be cultivated by a servile class, the effect on population will always be



unfavorable. Small and nearly equal divisions of the soil, cultivated by freemen, will commonly have the most benignant influences on agriculture, as improved agriculture has, reciprocally, on population. If large and unequal divisions of the territorial surface be favored by the laws, it is of great importance to the interests of population, that it be cultivated, not by a servile class who have no property in their own labor, but by free tenants, on such terms as would give them a common interest with the proprietor in the amelioration of the soil. This can only be done by introducing the custom of long leases, on a fixed and certain rent. It is requisite that the rents be certain, in order that the tenant may feel a kind of propriety in the land which he cultivates, independent on the caprice of his landlord: and that his lease should be so long as to secure to the actual cultivator a reasonable profit from every improvement which he makes.

Of not less importance is it generally to the population of states that the public manners should be simple and frugal. When a general luxury has invaded a nation, the vanity of individuals is apt to consume in the indulgence of an imprudent ostentation, or in the gratifications of a voluptuous, and effeminate taste, an expense which might be sufficient for the maintenance of many plain citizens of the same rank. Lands are wasted in

merely ornamental improvements, or in rearing animals for shew, which consume the product of those acres which should be devoted to feed men. If such a complete separation of ranks were established in society that the inferior orders should feel no ambition to emulate the superior, the luxury of the latter, who are, comparatively a very small portion of the state, might not be attended with consequences so obviously pernicious to the community. They might even repair, in a degree, the injuries which they do to population through the excesses of luxury, by the employment which those very excesses create for a greater number of artizans. But this apology of Mandeville's for luxury, under the paradoxical maxim that "private vices are public benefits," is false when it has, in any considerable degree, invaded the body of the people. In proportion as expensive habits of living have become general among them, and the difficulty of maintaining a family in a style of fashion is increased, marriage will be avoided by great numbers, as imposing an inconvenient burden, which they cannot support in consistency with the enjoyment of those pleasures, and the preservation of that rank and appearance, to which they have been accustomed in society.

Another consequence still more pernicious is likely to result from these manners, when celibacy among men has become so common as to be no longer disgraceful,—the

corruption of the female sex, and the profligacy of both. The laws cannot control public opinion. And it is known that when manners had arrived at this state in Rome, all the power of Roman despotism was found insufficient to force men into the connexions of marriage against the prevailing tide of luxury. And it soon became necessary to replenish the declining population, by the dangerous expedient of introducing large bodies of strangers into the heart of the empire.

As the pastoral state will sustain a greater population than the hunting, and agriculture than either, so the numbers of a people in any country, will be still further affected by the peculiar kinds of provision which custom had rendered most common in their diet. A more numerous population can be supported by the exclusive use of grain and esculent plants, as in India, than if the flesh of animals be mingled with them, which is always an expensive species of food ; unless we may except animals of the beeve kind, which, by their milk and their labor, may, perhaps, repay the expense of rearing them, and return some profit to the proprietor. But horses require such an extent of surface to maintain them that it can seldom be good policy in a nation that aims at the highest degree of population to employ them, even in the culture of the ground. It is better to cultivate it by the labor of man. Hence Moses has forbidden

kings, or the government of the populous nation of Israel, to encourage the multiplication of horses. They were excluded likewise from Sparta by the agrarian system of Lycurgus. There may, however, be other circumstances in a nation, as the mounting of their cavalry, or the transportation of the products of their labor, where there are few rivers or canals for that purpose, which may require some care in the breeding of this animal. In a country, also, like that of a large portion of the United States in which there is, at present, a superfluous quantity of land, and comparatively few laborers, the horse, on account of his activity and strength, may be advantageously employed in cultivating the ground. Having extensive pasture range he can be easily maintained, and by his labor, not only furnish an abundant supply for his own keeping, but yield a large surplus for the sustenance of man, and in some measure compensate the present deficiency of hands.—It is remarked by economical writers that the animal food which may most advantageously be mingled with vegetable in the subsistence of man, is that which is drawn from the waters, and especially that which is taken from the bosom of the ocean. It requires small expense to render it fit for human use ; and few hands are necessary to collect it. To this cause, it has been repeatedly observed, China is indebted for great part of her numerous popula-

tion ; if indeed it be as numerous as it has been represented.

It is obvious to all who have observed the operations of agriculture, that the earth may be made to yield the utmost that the united powers of fertility, climate and labor can produce, by fewer hands than its fruits can maintain. But men will not gratuitously exert themselves in the constant labors of the field, nor apply themselves to raise more from the soil than they find by experience to be necessary for their own subsistence, unless stimulated by the prospect of acquiring from abroad some convenience which they cannot easily supply to themselves, or gratifying some artificial taste to which the habits and customs of society have given birth. Hence we perceive the origin, and utility of arts, and of commerce, to employ the surplus of the hands in a country above those which are required to cultivate the land ; augmenting the resources for the comfort and convenience of living, as well as opening a new spring to population. For it is not merely the multiplication of the numbers of citizens which forms the exclusive object of calculation to a wise legislator, but the happiness of a numerous people, and the conveniences they may possess for the enjoyment of life.

In the commencement of civilized society, when the cultivator of the earth is often necessarily taken off from

from his useful labors in the field to fabricate his tools, to prepare his clothing, and to construct, with his own hands, his dwelling, and the various domestic utensils which necessity, or comfort, requires for the accommodation of himself and family, his agricultural labors will unavoidably be greatly impeded, and their product be proportionally diminished. A large portion of his time must be occupied in framing his instruments to assist him in the labors of the field ; which must still be imperfectly and coarsely executed, for want of skill in their construction, and of habit in passing with facility from one species of employment to another. But after experience has at length convinced him that these implements may be better, and more cheaply furnished by artists who devote their whole attention exclusively to the improvement of their respective arts, while he can more profitably employ his labor immediately upon the soil, there arises, by degrees, a separation of professions, —one employed chiefly in the earth to multiply provisions, the great resource of life, another occupied solely in the arts, to facilitate the labors of industry, or to promote the comfort of living. Both concurring to increase the number of citizens by furnishing, at once, provision, and employment, and creating a demand for their several products. The husbandman can give provision for the product of the artist's skill; and the in-

genuity and industry of the artist is rewarded by the provision furnished by the husbandman.

As long, however, as these mutual exchanges are made by bartering one commodity for another, they are necessarily attended with many inconveniences which greatly obstruct the progress of improvement. The artist may not, at all times, stand in need of the grain of the husbandman; at other times the simple wants of the husbandman, as far as they depend on the aids of the artist, may have a present supply. In those cases, the industry of the one, or of the other, will be without object or reward; and will want a sufficient motive for exertion. What is chiefly requisite then is some medium of exchange which shall always be deemed an equivalent for both labor and skill, and which may be ready on all occasions, to supply every want of nature, or of habit, or to reward every exertion of industry, or ingenuity. To render this medium most useful, and effectual to the ends for which it was created, a class of men is required, whose chief business, and whose interest it shall be to circulate it, and facilitate the necessary exchanges of society by being always ready to purchase whatever either of labor, or of art, may be brought into the market. Hence the origin of money, and of trade, and the great utility of the class of merchants. Labor is stimulated when it can always depend on a certain re-

muneration, by which the proprietor, and cultivator of the soil, after supplying his most necessary wants, may gain a surplus to supply those desires which taste, or the ideas of convenience, have created. The means are augmented of maintaining a more numerous population; artizans are increased when every product of their industry and skill is sure of meeting an immediate reward.

—Arts are subdivided, in order that the workmanship in each branch may be executed with greater perfection and expedition; beauty is added to utility, because commerce awakens and cherishes taste, and furnishes the means of recompensing the ingenuity, as well as the industry of the artist.—The raw materials furnished by husbandry, are manufactured in different ways for ornament, or use. And when the product of the loom, or the laboratory exceeds the demand for home consumption; or, when the excellence of the fabric invites demand from abroad, commerce affords the means of turning a people's industry and skill to profit, and receiving, in return for them, wealth that shall add a new stimulus to internal improvements, and augment population by increasing the demand for labor. Exports may often be repaid in provisions for the maintenance of additional artists above those which the agriculture of the country can support; or, more profitably, perhaps, by the raw materials of other regions, to be worked up to advantage



by manufacturers at home, only to be re-exported for fresh accessions of the precious metals, of provisions, or of other raw materials of labor; by every exchange, however, furnishing new sources of employment, and of population. Often, indeed, the returns of commerce are made in luxuries which the influence of custom has caused to be esteemed among the desirable enjoyments, and sometimes converted almost into the necessities of life. But as these luxuries must be paid for either directly, or circuitously, by the products of the soil, or the labors of the artist, we see that, in all the ways which have been mentioned, and in a vast variety of others, such as promoting the arts connected with ship-building, and all the means of facilitating transportation or exchanges at home or abroad, besides the cultivation of the various sciences which have either advanced the art of navigation, or been advanced by it, commerce may be made the means of stimulating industry, and of greatly augmenting the population of a country, as well as of increasing the convenience, and comfort of living.

It has been made a question among speculative politicians whether commerce or agriculture can be made to support the greater population?—Without entering into the extensive details which would be necessary to give a complete solution to this question, I shall wait only to lay down the few following brief, and general prin-

ciples. On a small territory advantageously situated to the sea, however ungrateful may be the soil, commerce, if the people can render themselves the carriers of the trade of other nations, as was the case of ancient Tyre, or the modern Amsterdam, may support a more numerous population than could be supported by the mere force of agriculture under any circumstances of fertility of soil.—On the other hand, in a territory of moderate extent, agriculture without the aid of commerce, may, by the influence of excellent moral institutions, such as we see exemplified in the laws of Moses, or Lycurgus, maintain a population equal to that of the most flourishing trade. But in an extensive nation, over which it is impossible that such institutions can reach in their full vigor, it requires the united influence of commerce, and of agriculture, to carry the numbers of the inhabitants to the highest practicable, or desirable limits.

Among the chief advantages of a well regulated trade, is its adding refinement to the enjoyments of life, and quickening the exertions of all the human powers. Gold and silver drawn from mines, or accumulated by the plunder of conquest, foster only indolence and vanity, and impair the energy and nobleness of the human character. But while the industrious spirit of a people can be preserved, the increasing wealth arising from trade will ever combine solidity with elegance, in the practice of the arts,

and in the manner of living; but where regular industry is no longer requisite in its acquisition, we see only a tasteless ostentation planted by the side of poverty and wretchedness, the unfailing symptoms of a declining population.

Climate, soil, and other physical causes being given, population will be principally affected by the nature of the government. In proportion as the principles of civil liberty are incorporated into the political system of any people, the exertions of industry, both agricultural and commercial, find their greatest encouragement, by the security which each man enjoys in the possession of the fruits of his own labor, or ingenuity. But where, in consequence of the defective organization of the government or the uncertainty of the laws, another may come in, and seize with impunity the product of your labor, the land must soon be neglected, or remain imperfectly tilled. The husbandman will reluctantly expend his toil for the benefit only of a master. He will raise no more from the soil, unless by compulsion, than is sufficient for the scanty supply of his own immediate wants. He will naturally avoid accumulating a surplus which may be plundered by an oppressor. And, in such a country, population will decline in proportion to the insecurity, the distrust, and the consequent indolence of the people. Republics are commonly more populous than monarchies

under the same advantages of soil and climate. Under the same advantages, I say, for sometimes we find republican institutions in the midst of mountainous elevations, or a hard sterility of soil, where nothing but the force of liberty could support even a small population. And monarchies, in which certain principles of freedom are interwoven with their constitution, are more populous than despotism, in which all is exposed to the caprice of a master. China is a country governed by so peculiar a system, and is, hitherto, so little known, that it can hardly be regarded as a subject from which any definite examples, or instructions can be drawn. But where property is most secure, there agriculture and commerce will commonly be most flourishing, and there we shall find the most abundant means for the support of human existence.

From the preceding reflections it results as a general conclusion, that the most numerous population which can be maintained in any country must be a combined effect of the general industry of the people, of the frugality and simplicity of the public manners, united however with that elegance which springs from a successful cultivation of the arts,—of the freedom of the government,—and of the perfect security of the property of every citizen in the fruits of his own labor, or skill.—But, the existence of these requisite conditions being

presupposed, the population of any region will soon arrive to the full amount of the numbers which can be subsisted on the most ample product that can be extracted from the soil, together with all the supplemental provision which may be added by commerce. Beyond this point, it has already been said, that the numbers of society can never be made to increase. And, while the conditions which have just been mentioned remain, they can never fall far below it. Even the devastations of war, or the consequences of any other general cause by which the population may be diminished, for a time, will be speedily repaired, so as, in a few years, to be scarcely perceived.—We sometimes see philosophers and statesmen setting themselves laboriously to account for the depopulation of nations, from the accidental occurrences of pestilence, or war, and of other causes which have little or no connexion with the internal state and manners of the people. The true causes of a deficient, or declining population can only be found in the imperfection of the government, or the corruption of the public morals. While the government of a nation rests upon the principles of freedom, and the manners of the people are undepraved, nature has provided, in the human constitution, sufficient incentives to marriage; and as long as the industry of the people, and the simplicity of their habits of living, bring the maintenance of

a family within the compass of the reasonable and moderate exertions of the greater portion of the citizens, population will never decline ; on the other hand, it will continue to increase while the smallest addition can be made to the means of subsistence. If thousands should be cut off, as was seen in the destructive wars of the Roman republic with the numerous states of Italy, and in the more formidable successes of Hannibal, thousands immediately rise up to supply their places. But if the political, or moral state of a nation indicate any principles of corruption and decay, the losses occasioned by emigration, or by any of those fatal accidents which sometimes depopulate kingdoms, can seldom be effectually repaired.—The numerous emigrations which have taken place from Great-Britain, within two centuries, to America, and India, cannot be perceived in any decrease of her population ; while those from Spain to her American provinces have left her only half her people.

Moralists and civilians have never failed to remark that simplicity of manners and frugality in the habits of living, form those characteristics of society which are most favorable to population, and that, on the other hand, luxury becomes unfriendly to an increase of numbers by a double influence,—the wastes which it creates, —and the discouragements which it throws in the way

of marriage. It is not easy, however, to draw the line between these different states, so as precisely to strike that virtuous mean on the one hand at which simplicity, united with a manly taste in the arts, commonly marks the most flourishing period of population, and that point, on the other, at which taste begins to degenerate into sickly refinement, and the arts, to be misapplied to the gratification of effeminacy and voluptuousness. Our ideas of simplicity in the manner of living ought not to be confined to the possession merely of the necessities of life. That rudeness which is the result of ignorance, and the total destitution of cultivation, is as little favorable, as vicious refinement, to the increase of the general family of man. A certain taste, on the contrary, for the conveniencies and elegancies of art, not only adds to the comfort of living, but, by creating new demands on industry, and furnishing new incentives both to ingenuity and exertion, becomes also a productive source of population.

I observe on this subject, finally, that it is among the most useful speculations and labors of the politician and legislator to ascertain, and put in operation, the most effectual means of promoting agriculture and commerce; of augmenting the quantity of provision for the sustenance of life, which can either be raised from the soil or

collected from the ocean; of increasing the facilities of internal transportation by canals, or roads; and of stimulating universal industry by multiplying the demands for useful employment, and rendering its remuneration prompt and secure.



LECTURE IV.

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**THE** next object which will naturally attract the attention of the philosopher in contemplating human nature, in that light in which we have begun to consider it, is the social disposition of man, and the various forms of association under which the species is inclined to collect itself. Most animals discover some tendencies to assemble together, and to form unions, more or less regular and intimate, with other animals of the same kind. Some appear to be actuated simply by those natural impulses of pleasure which all creatures feel, in a certain degree, at the approach of other creatures like themselves. These ties, however, are feeble, and easily dissolved by the slightest demands of any stronger appetite, —Some are attracted merely by the habit of associating together, during that period of life in which the assistance and care of the parent animal was found necessary either to afford protection, or to furnish provision, to a numerous brood of young.—But the most regular societies which subsist among the inferior animals, are those which spring from the powerful instincts of nature, in certain species, assembling them in large numbers for their mutual assistance and preservation, as we see in the beaver, the ant, and the bee. These communities

are evidently not formed by any preconcert, or design of the animal; but by an impulse and direction given to it by that universal spirit which animates all things, and guides every creature to the proper end of its being.

Man adds to the instinctive impulses, and social attractions of his nature, the superior influence of reason in giving the form to his social relations. This principle, though more extensive in its range, is not so certain and uniform in its determinations as that of instinct. Many considerations, arising either from the error and weakness of the human mind, from casual situations, from choice, or from compulsion, often occur to vary the nature, and external forms, both of his domestic, and his political associations. When legislators, or nations frame their civil institutions with the greatest deliberation and reflection, their inability to foresee the results of human action in all the possible combinations of society, and the infinite casualties to which it may be exposed, may make them frequently mistake the best means of effecting their own intentions. And we know that the errors of ignorance, the fickleness of caprice and passion, and the numerous accidents which frequently arise to give their unsteady impulses to society, are so various as to be continually impressing new shapes upon the associations of men.—The different ends, aimed at by the policy of different nations, have likewise their influence

in changing the spirit, and modifying the forms of their respective governments.\*—Thus, while in the associations of the inferior animals, we every where trace the unvarying uniformity of instinct; in those of men we perceive the varieties that result from the imbecility of our reason, which, though a superior principle of moral action, is less certain in the conduct of its plans.

The first form under which society appears, is the domestic; which, however, ultimately spreads itself out into the most expansive associations of states and empires.—And it is worthy the attention of philosophy to observe how nature has provided, in this primary relation, for the future diffusion of the social ties. Parents are attached to their children by affections which are among the most powerful in the human heart, and which engage them with infinite pains to provide for their subsistence and comfort, and for their instruction in such arts as they know to be necessary for their future safety and happiness. The period of dependence in man is long; and during that portion of life wherein his princi-

\* Of these we have examples, according to Montesquieu, in the Spartan, the Roman, the Jewish, and the Chinese governments; of which the first aimed chiefly at cultivating a martial spirit among her citizens, principally with a view to national defence. The Roman aimed at extension of territory; the Jewish at the preservation of religion; and the Chinese at the tranquillity of the empire.

ples of action are chiefly formed, affection to parents is continually strengthened by a thousand reciprocal acts of duty and endearment; and the habits of submission to their authority daily acquire new force. At length experience, and the growing maturity of the understanding, render children more deeply sensible of their obligations to the kindness and care of those who have nourished and protected their infancy; and reason and gratitude add their powerful ties to those created by habit and dependence. The natural deference, likewise, which is paid to age and wisdom, when directed towards a parent, in whom are united so many other causes of attachment, and veneration, must give great authority to his commands, or his advice. Parents and children, therefore, would early be joined in a most natural and firm association; from which primary union would spring the first elements of civil society.

The children of the primitive family forming, in time, families of their own, in which would be repeated the same duties, attachments, and habits of submission, towards their own respective and immediate heads; the whole would, notwithstanding, be still attracted by a common sentiment of veneration towards their common progenitor as long as he should live. With no other control than what age, habit, and respect for ancestry impose upon the free mind, would they be disposed to

regard their common ancestor as the umpire of their disputes, and to follow his sage and experienced advice as the law of private morals, and their guide in the greater movements of the community. On his death, the person who approached nearest to him in age, or who, by lineal descent, should be regarded as the natural representative of the family ; or, perhaps, a council composed of those elders who had formerly been the immediate associates of their great ancestor would, by general consent, or by implicit submission, undertake to regulate the affairs of the tribe.—Having, in this early period of society, no splendid objects of wealth and grandeur which could awaken ambition or excite to tyranny ; holding a voluntary sway over men who were nearly their equals, and acknowledged to be their brethren, their counsels would aim only at protecting the common liberty, and promoting the common good. The universal persuasion of this, and that sympathetic feeling of a common interest, which can exist only in the simplest state of manners, would create general confidence in their governors, and induce a tranquil submission to their mild and equitable government.

It is obvious that a few descents from the primitive ancestor, and the dispersion of his descendents, must raise up many separate heads of clans, or tribes, who would lose in time, the feelings of their common relation

to one another, and even the remembrance of their common origin. The customary exercise of the sovereign authority in their hands by the voluntary acquiescence of the people, would pass into an hereditary claim of right. Hence the earliest histories of the world present to us innumerable petty sovereignties, consisting of single cities, or small territories, every where governed by princes, or kings.† These kings possessed a patriarchal, judiciary, and military authority. As patriarchs they were the priests of the nation,\* and exercised the chief offices of religion; as judges they had the supreme administration of its laws entrusted to their wisdom and authority; and as directors of the military force, they were invested with the command of its armies, whether for attack or defence. But for all the interior regula-

† These terms are known to have the same signification as chiefs, or rulers, or the supporters, and protectors of the people.

\* The office of the priesthood, or the prerogative of performing the religious rites and ceremonies, was naturally attached to every father of a family. The supreme priesthood of a tribe, therefore, became connected with the office of prince, or the acknowledged successor, and representative of its ancestral head. And as this character, in the first ages, and among a simple people, conferred the most sacred and venerable dignity on those who bore it, it contributed greatly to strengthen the regal, by the religious awe that surrounded the patriarchal authority.

tions of the kingdom, and for all objects of general concern which were not fixed by ancient custom, the assembly of the people must be convened. Thus we see in the military enterprizes of the Greeks, at the period of the Trojan war, even the share of plunder which fell to their commanders, and kings, was allotted by common consent, in the assembly of the people.

Such is the natural origin of the first petty monarchies which history presents to us in the earliest ages of the world. The sacred scriptures afford us ground to believe that the principles of agriculture, and of all the most necessary arts of life, were well understood by the great father of the race, and by him transmitted to those families which, springing immediately from him, became the founders of the primitive nations which grew up in the vicinity of his residence. Reason concurs in the same conclusion. Hence we perceive the elements of civilized life among the earliest nations who appear on the great theatre of history. And, from this source we deduce the origin of civil government, among the first nations of the earth, who appear, from the beginning, to have possessed among them all the useful arts in a state of considerable perfection.\*

\* See these principles more particularly illustrated and confirmed in the introduction to the essay on the varieties of mankind; and in the second lecture on the evidences of the christian religion, delivered to the senior class in the college of N. J.

But many restless and wandering spirits would soon forsake the restraints and subordinations of civilized society, that they might emancipate themselves from the labors of the workshop and the field, and indulge their genius in the freedom of the forest, and the pleasures of the chace. In these idle or ungovernable minds we see the origin of those savage tribes which early filled up the northern, southern, and western deserts of the world. Among them society and civil government would commence a new career. Each father of a family, or some enterprizing chief among several who should fix their residence near one centre, would become the head of a separate tribe; among such a people age and experience, or enterprize and courage, would prove the only titles to authority. It would be merely advisory and would be seldom exerted, unless when circumstances should arise to call forth any general deliberation, or movement of the nation. In their simple condition of life, this degree of influence would be sufficient for all the common purposes of their rude society. On every other occasion, individuals would be left solely to the guidance of their own discretion. In an extensive forest, few occasions of collision could occur among members of the same tribe. But, when hunting or pasturage should at length afford too scanty a supply to their growing numbers, some of the supernumerary families would be constrained to



remove to new regions under different leaders, where, in time, they would forget their common origin. Similar subdivisions being often repeated, the newly formed tribes, spreading themselves through the boundless wilderness, would gradually extend their limits into the vicinity of one another. Hence would arise manifold causes of dissention, from mutual injuries, or encroachments on each others hunting grounds or pastures. This would create a new object to society,—its defence against hostile aggression; and would require a new modification of its powers, to fit it for the operations of war. This would be the subject of short deliberation. The enterprise and courage natural to man, and his proud resentment of national insult, would ever render the whole tribe prompt to fly to arms on the slightest occasion of injury, real, or imaginary.—Some ardent spirit, more bold than the rest, would offer himself to lead the enterprise; and would instantly be followed by a martial body of youth.—In cases of great and manifest danger to the nation, the elders, venerable by their experience and the gravity of their years, would often interpose their cautious advice with effect. But, too frequently, the ardor of young warriors would tend to impel the fierce and uncorrected passions of savages against the prudent counsels of age and wisdom.

If the hereditary chiefs of a nation are found to possess that high and daring courage which commonly distinguishes the leaders of a rude and ferocious people, they will naturally be followed in conducting their national enterprizes. Sometimes age, or infirmities, bodily or mental, may disqualify the hereditary, or patriarchal head of a tribe, for martial atchievment. These functions must consequently devolve on some other member of their small community. Thus a distinction may grow up by degrees between the civil and military chieftains, and between the several departments of the government, as far as that term may be applied to their rude associations, which are subject to their immediate influence. In the very simple state of savage manners, in which the same sympathies usually animate every member of their tribes, and no splendid objects of ambition exist to debase or warp their minds from the pursuit of the common interest, there will rarely arise any collision between these authorities. Each man is a warrior, when roused by any common and national sentiment of emulation, or of revenge. And, in a season of peace, every one tranquilly pursues his customary occupations, and pleasures, which consist alternately in the active enterprizes of the chase, and the stupid calm of absolute inaction. No constraint is perceived, except what may be supposed to be involved in that advisory influence which has been

already mentioned, and may be considered as most nearly allied to the officers of civil government in civilized nations. Either civil or military subordination, however, is feebly felt among such a people. In the progress of society, when wealth, and the distinctions of rank come to offer higher objects to the ambition of men, and the causes and occasions of war are proportionably multiplied, the military power too often affords the dangerous temptation, and the opportunity of usurping all the authorities of the state; unless the constitution of the government, aware of the danger, can, by wise and prudent precautions, so incorporate it into the mass of its powers as effectually to preserve its subordination to the civil magistracy. This is one of the most difficult operations of legislation.

We see, in these observations, the origin of civil government out of domestic society. But the forms which it assumes are casual, and dependent on an infinite variety of adventitious circumstances, which are constantly arising in human affairs.

In political associations, which have been more the result of accident than design, the limits of subjection and power are always indefinite. And this uncertainty opens the door to dangerous usurpations, or abuses of power. Power always tends to exceed its customary

boundaries; and when these boundaries are loosely marked, its encroachments may be easily effected; almost without design, in the early stages of its progression, on the part of the rulers, and without observation on the part of the nation. In a season of public tranquillity especially, its gradual usurpations are hardly remarked by unsuspecting people, who are seldom vigilant, as long as they are prosperous. On the other hand, in seasons of public danger, a popular, enterprizing and ambitious leader may, with the entire approbation of the people, stretch his authority beyond its customary limits. But, when these acts have been frequently repeated, although most beneficially for the nation, and the more beneficially, often, the more dangerous, they become, in time, prescriptions in favor of illegal power. Thus has arbitrary dominion most commonly stolen insensibly on the slumbering confidence of nations: frequently it has been incautiously built on the eminent services of the best citizens, or the greatest princes. But by no means is a nation more certainly exposed to this danger than by the frequency of wars, in which extraordinary powers are entrusted in the hands of leaders of pre-eminent talents.

As long as nations exist in that rude state which takes place antecedently to the introduction and improvement of agriculture, and the useful arts, seldom can any important encroachment be made upon the liberties of the

people. It is wealth chiefly which provokes the attempts of ambition, and affords a subject on which tyrannical power can act. It is only when property in the land becomes fixed, and its productive value has been greatly augmented by the improvement of the arts of agriculture, and commerce, that tyranny finds both its object, and its means. And the casual forms of association, and the indefinite boundaries of authority and subordination, which have insensibly grown up in the early periods of society, afford it an opportunity, with the less observation, to introduce, and establish its dangerous claims. —But the most complete, and formidable despotisms are founded in conquest, in which the enslaved people, having their national spirit subdued, and being degraded in their own esteem, have no longer the vigor to attempt their deliverance; and are become, in consequence of the humiliations of imposed power, equally void of wisdom to plan, and of energy to conduct the means of their salvation.

Without dilating, at present, on either the natural, or accidental means by which civil government, in its various forms, has been introduced into different nations, let it be remarked, that the evils resulting, in experience, from the undefined limits of authority and subjection in these casual systems, have led many legislators, profoundly reflecting on the nature of man, to devise such

positive institutions, and so to organize the various departments of authority necessary to a good government, as may be best adapted, to attain its proper ends; the liberty, with the obedience of the people, on the one hand, and, on the other, security against the injurious, and unlawful encroachments of power.

These positive institutions are sentiments of general justice, and utility, as far as they are conceived by the legislator, formed into fundamental laws, sanctioned by the supreme authority, and supported by the whole power of the community.—Law may be defined to be a known and public prescription of right, declared to be the will, and enjoined by the authority and power of the state.

The code of the laws may be established, and announced in any mode prescribed by the sovereign authority. They are divided into two great classes,—the political,—and the civil. The former consists of those laws which define the frame of the government; the latter of those which prescribe the rules of conduct of the citizens towards one another, and towards the public and its magistrates.—Those only which respect the frame of government, in its general outlines, I am to consider at present, as they mark out the forms of association under which mankind, in different ages, and countries, have been collected. A more particular and detailed view of

the subject of civil government will be presented to our consideration in a subsequent branch of this system.

The forms of government may be considered, generally, as being either simple, or mixed. The simple embrace those in which the supreme power is vested in a single person, or a single body of men. In the mixed forms, on the other hand, the supreme powers of the state are divided among a plurality of persons, or assemblies, in such a manner that they shall respectively form some check upon one another in favor of the public liberty.

The simple forms are commonly enumerated under the heads of democracy, aristocracy, monarchy, and despotism.—Democracy implies the government of the *people*; which may be exercised immediately by themselves convened in general assembly; or by representatives chosen either in general assembly, or in particular districts of the state, and afterwards convened in one national body. An immediate democracy can be exercised only over a small territory; that by representation may be diffused over a more extensive region. A small body of representatives may be easily and usefully collected for directing the affairs of the nation, where the whole mass of the people could not be assembled. But in order to give their counsels the actual tone of the

national mind, and to preserve their power from being extended beyond the ends for which it was entrusted, or the limits within which it is circumscribed by the laws, the representative should ever be amenable to the constituent body of the people at short periods, by the frequent returns of election; and should possess no authority in his individual capacity, only when regularly assembled in one body with his colleagues. At all other times, he should merge in the mass of the community, being subject, in common with his fellow-citizens, to his own laws.

Aristocracy is a government exercised by a small proportion of the population of a state, under the denomination, commonly, of patricians, or nobles, who enjoy hereditary wealth, and hereditary privileges superior to the general body of the people.—This form of government may be varied like the former, being in some nations exercised by the whole class of nobles, who, in consequence of their birth-right alone, are constituent members of the legislative senate; and, in others, by a certain proportion delegated out of the whole body of the nobility. In this government the nobles are the nation, and the people are nothing; except so far as it pleases the ruling class, through motives of humanity, or policy, to raise them out of their annihilation.



Monarchy, as distinguished from despotism, is the government of one man exercised agreeably to known and established laws, commonly deposited under the protection of some tribunal, or body of men, educated to interpret them, and invested with high authorities and privileges in the state. The best model perhaps of such a government was that which existed in France previous to the late revolution. The basis of the legislative code consisted of the ancient usages and customs of the nation; most of them founded in the common sentiments of equity which prevailed at a period when the national manners were comparatively simple; but many of them, no doubt, introduced by the undue influence which power and wealth naturally confer on hereditary superiority over the inferior orders of the community. This judiciary system, thus compiled, was placed under the custody of the parliament, or supreme tribunal of Paris, with the aid of the subordinate parliaments of the different provinces. Of this depository of the laws it was the duty, and the privilege, to judge of the consistency of any new decree, or arret, proposed by the government, with the general system of legislation, and the tenor of the laws already established. If it so far contradicted the settled jurisprudence of the nation that the parliament refused to enregister it, no authority could make it a law. There are, at least, many exam-

ples in the history of France of the effectual opposition made by that body to the arbitrary edicts attempted to be introduced by the sovereign into the public code. No hereditary privileges are annexed to their station. And the knowledge that their children, and families are to return into the mass of the people, forms an important pledge for their fidelity to the interests of the nation. It is true that this body alone would be feeble to contend against the power of the crown, if its authority were not supported by the influence of the class of nobles, whose interests being, in some instances, united with the privileges of the people, as, in others, they are with the dignity of the prince, contribute, by their weight, to give, at once, stability to the throne, and security to freedom.

Despotism is the absolute dominion of one man, unlimited by any fixed and general laws, except those of religion, which are known, in the most arbitrary governments, to possess a powerful restraint over the caprices of the prince, and uncontroled by the influence of any permanent order of nobility. All rank, and all law exist merely in the will of the despot. His authority is established, and maintained by the army; and a military subordination pervades the whole state. The very instrument of his power, however, imposes some check on its caprice. Capricious, effeminate, and cruel princes

are apt to lose the respect of their troops, no less than of their people; and then a revolution delivers them from the tyrant. Honor and bravery will often be the best recommendations of his successor to the choice of a body of men who are led by their profession to place the highest value on the heroic qualities. And these qualities being commonly associated with many other noble and generous attributes of the soul, they will often be found, in the hands of a powerful prince, peculiarly favorable to the prosperity of a nation. Such a prince understanding, likewise, how much his own glory is connected with the improvement of his empire in agriculture, and the arts, will frequently set himself with zeal to cherish them. Despotisms, therefore, do not always present to us that extreme of wretchedness which, in theory, is always ascribed to them, and which in practice they too often exhibit.

The mixed forms of government are either republican or monarchical. The republican usually consists of a senate of nobles, if there be in the state a distinct class of that grade, and an assembly representing the body of the people. These bodies are constituted in different forms, with various powers, and privileges in different states. In those political communities in which there is no separate order of patricians, or nobility, as in the United States of America, still it has been found useful

to organize the legislative body with at least two distinct branches; and to constitute them, if possible, for which various means have been devised, in such a manner as to render them proper checks, as well as efficient aids to one another. The sympathies of the more numerous branch of the legislature are believed, by the peculiar mode of its appointment, to enter more immediately into the feeling and interest of the great body of the people. On the other hand, the smaller branch is so constituted that the independent sovereignty of the separate states, and the property of the wealthier orders of the community, are supposed to find their most secure protection in it. The mass of the American population, however, is so uniform in its structure, that nearly the same sentiments may be expected always to animate both these bodies.

Mixed monarchical forms of government, or those in which monarchy constitutes one essential branch, may be variously compounded. In some instances they may consist of a king, with a senate, or assembly of nobles. In others a branch may be added to these composed of a representative body of the people. Each of these portions of the government, likewise, may be differently organized, according to the circumstances in which a nation finds itself. The king may be hereditary, or elective. The senate may consist of the whole body of

nobles, who hold their seats by hereditary birth-right, or only of a portion of that body delegated by various modes of appointment. The representatives of the people may, likewise, be designated in various ways according to the usages of the nation, or the peculiar ideas of the legislator.

The king, in some constitutions, may be merely an executive magistrate; in others, besides his executive functions, he may form a distinct and independent branch of the legislature;—as in the constitution of the British government. Here, although each branch of the legislature, in the theory of the government, possesses a negative on the others, yet their powers, and interests are so balanced as generally to incline them, and to render it their mutual interest, to move in concert.

Thus have I sketched a brief outline of the different forms of association under which the species have been collected together. Civil government has commenced in domestic society; whence we trace its varied combinations through all the forms of political and civil union. The subordination of children to parents affords the most natural example of the original patriarchal governments of the world. As mankind multiplied, the forms of their associations would be varied by innumerable unforeseen, and undesigned circumstances. The evils resulting

in time, from the indefinite limits of authority and subjection, gave occasion, in many nations, to positive institutions designed to mark, with greater precision, the powers of the magistrate, and the duties of the subject; thereby to promote, as far as possible, in the midst of our errors and crimes, the tranquility, amelioration, and happiness of the human race.—I consider man, in the next place, as susceptible of improvement.

## LECTURE V.

## CONTENTS.

*Of human nature as susceptible of improvement.—The inferior animals guided by instinct, which is always the same.—Man governed chiefly by reason, which is an improvable principle.—Different states of society exhibit its improvement in different degrees.—Chiefly promoted by comparison and communication of thought. Thought communicated by signs, either natural or instituted.—Natural signs—Instituted signs, either spoken, or written.—Two objects principally worthy our attention,—the diversity of languages in the world,—the similarity of structure which pervades all languages.—Of written language—first by painting—next by abbreviated, and symbolical painting—lastly, by verbal and alphabetical characters.—The great resemblance in all the known languages in the number and order of the vowels and consonants.—Of the hieroglyphics of Egypt.—Of the invention of other arts—of the subdivision of the arts—of their improvement by commerce.—Of the discovery and improvement of science.*

THE object of the present lecture is to consider man as susceptible of improvement. The inferior animals

exist nearly in the same state in every age. Instinct, the principle by which they are chiefly governed, operates with unvarying constancy, and does not depend, like reason, on the accuracy of observation, and comparison, and the consequential consistency of deduction. The principal difference among animals of the same species consists in bodily strength and agility, or beauty of form. And these qualities, although greatly affected by the influence of climate, depend chiefly on the nature and abundance of their food; and, in animals that have been tamed, and domesticated, on the care of man. The improvements of which human nature is susceptible are visible, not only in the external form and appearance of the species, but much more in the powers and faculties of the mind. Man is seen in his lowest condition in the savage state. Paucity of objects in that state to give extent or variety to his ideas, and the rarity of the occasions that occur to call the various talents of the mind into vigorous operation, must necessarily leave it to languish in inaction. In the savage we see nature in its original rudeness, without any of the added powers of art and cultivation. But as society advances in its progress, as arts are invented, and the mutual comparison and interchange of thought is accelerated, its combinations, its contrasts, and all its exercises, multiplied and varied, the mind becomes more quick and pene-



trating in its perceptions; its reason is strengthened, its taste corrected and refined; the sphere of the imagination is infinitely enlarged, and the intellect rendered infinitely more powerful and comprehensive in its grasp. All the faculties of nature continually acquire new vigor and activity; till society having attained its ultimate point of improvement, begins like all things human, to languish and decay; corrupted by luxury, or sunk and enervated by oppression.

One of the principal sources of improvement in man, and one of his chief distinctions from the inferior animals, is the power of communicating, and recording his thoughts, and increasing and correcting his knowledge by communication.

Few things in the philosophy of human nature, merit more attention than the means of imparting our thoughts to one another, by audible and visible signs. Our common perceptions, our most useful, and our profoundest reflections, the finest emotions of the heart, and the most excursive flights of the imagination, and, what is still more difficult, the most abstracted conceptions of the intellect, may, by this admirable contrivance, be made obvious to the senses of sight, and hearing. In it the infinite address of human reason is chiefly visible.—The signs employed for the communication of thought

may be divided into two classes,—the *natural*, and the *artificial*, or *conventional*.—The natural signs are those looks, gestures, and tones of voice which, without the assistance of words, taking hold merely of the sympathies of nature, call up in the minds of others, the ideas, the emotions, and the desires which occupy our own. Their field indeed is extremely limited, being confined chiefly to point out objects which are immediately under the cognizance of the senses, or to express the strong and sudden impulses of the heart. The objects embraced in this field, it is true, if their signs are skilfully managed, can be conveyed to the conception of others with infinitely more vivacity and impression than they could by words, or by any merely artificial signs. But, for abstract truths, or general principles of science, they are little adapted.

The invention and application of the artificial and conventional signs for this purpose—the communication and interchange of the perceptions, reflections, and reasonings of the mind, contain the principal proofs of human ingenuity, and are the chief means of carrying forward the improvements of our nature towards their ultimate perfection.—They are either vocal sounds, or visible characters, and constitute language either spoken or written. Grammarians define speech to consist of articulate sounds, simple or compounded, used by custom to

express the ideas and perceptions of the mind. They are denominated *articulate*, from the latin word signifying a *joint*, on account of the innumerable joints, and flexures of which the organs of speech are composed, enabling them, by the dilatations and contractions of the great channel of sound, and the various contacts by which that sound is modified, so to diversify the human voice, as to fit it to give expression to the infinite variety of human thought.

On the subject of language two things especially merit the attention of the philosopher ; in the first place, the diversity of languages existing in the world ;—and secondly, the similarity of structure which pervades all languages.

Diversity of language is the natural consequence of its original imperfection, and of the infinite migrations of mankind while society yet existed in its simplest state. The objects about which men would have occasion to converse in the earliest periods of the world, would necessarily be few. At that time science, and the liberal arts, which give rise to the greatest portion of every improved language, could have had no place, or must have been confined to a very circumscribed sphere. Man existing at first, simply in a family state, his whole vocabulary would extend only to the objects of first neces-

sity, and to the relations and duties of domestic life, together with the practical offices of religion. The state of society being extremely simple, the compass of language would consequently be proportionably limited. When mankind began to multiply, the vacant and unoccupied earth would soon invite their dispersion into different and remote regions. In these situations their various tribes, having small intercourse with one another, must have commenced the vast career of improvement with comparatively few elements of language in common. And even these few, would, in time, suffer considerable changes from those causes which, in all countries, produce a continual flux in the form and meaning of words. But, in the progress of social improvement, those common elements of a narrow ancestral tongue, with which so many different tribes would enter on their progressive course, would soon become the smallest portion of their respective languages. Infinitely the widest compass of discourse consists in those accessions which it is constantly receiving from the invention and cultivation of the useful and ornamental, the mechanical and liberal arts. And in all the additions made to language, hardly is it possible that any two nations should have ever employed the same terms or compositions of phrases to express their respective inventions, or combinations of thought. Hence there would arise, in time, as many

different dialects as separate and independent tribes of men.\*

\* Many writers, too little advertent to the laws and economy of the natural, or moral world, have incautiously imagined that the diversity of languages by which the various tribes of men have been distinguished, could have arisen only from that miraculous confusion recorded to have taken place at the building of the tower of Babel.—A weak argument or supposition, pretended to be drawn from the sacred scriptures, for a natural event, as if it were a supernatural operation, must always do an injury to true religion. And the whole transaction at Babel seems, by many commentators, to be but ill understood. That extraordinary tower appears, from its structure, as recorded in the sacred history, compared with similar edifices found in various places in the east, to have been destined to the purposes of a superstitious and idolatrous worship. [*Vide* fragments and illustrations of scripture by unknown hands added to Calmet's dictionary of the bible.] We derive the same inference from the accounts, preserved by the Greek historians, of the temple of Belus, [the Baal of the Assyrians or Babylonians] which was probably no more than the ancient tower completed, and applied to its primary destination. The true origin of this structure most probably sprung from an ambitious design entertained by those primitive people of laying the foundation, in a great metropolis, of an empire which should, not only embrace all the inhabitants of the world at that period, but be extended over the future nations which should arise from them. And in order to strengthen the civil power by the influence of religion, it is probable that they resolved, according to the prevalent ideas of those early eastern nations, to establish a magnificent center for their national worship, in a temple or turret whose *top*, or *dome* should be consecrated (not *reach*, according to an erroneous conception of the translators

The next subject which particularly demands our attention, is the similarity of structure which pervades all languages. I do not mean that resemblance in the names particularly of objects of the first necessity in living, or of most frequent occurrence in nature, which

of the bible) to *heaven* ; that is, to the religious worship of the *celestial bodies*, which were the objects of the primitive idolatry. In executing this project before absolute power had yet imposed its despotic control over the human mind, great division of sentiment, and violent contests, (for what can be more violent than divisions which frequently spring from political and religious dissensions?) seem to have arisen among the people, and to have proceeded, at length, to such extremes as to create an utter alienation, and division of families. This appears to be the genuine interpretation of that confusion which existed, according to the sacred history, at the building of the tower of Babel,—a confusion, not of languages, but of sentiments, projects, and designs, which created violent and conflicting parties that ended, at last, in total separation from one another. This interpretation is strictly conformable to the signification of the original Hebrew term translated, in our version, *tongue*, or *speech*. It is found in but few passages in the bible, and, among these, it more frequently, and, by its structure in the sentence, necessarily must imply *sentiment*, or *opinion*, rather than *speech*, or *language*. The displeasure of Almighty God against these operators seems to have been directed chiefly against that center of idolatry which they intended to establish, and that universal empire at which they aimed, so ruinous to the prosperity and happiness of mankind. —See lectures on the evidences of the christ. rel. delivered to the senior class in the college, N. J. lect. 14th. page 138—140. And on the Heb. word Robinson's *clavis pentateuchi*, chap. 11th, v. 1.

can frequently be traced among nations who are known to have sprung from a common origin. These resemblances can sometimes be pursued far, by making only reasonable allowances for those changes in pronunciation, or in orthography, which time introduces into all languages, and the corruptions often introduced by foreign admixtures. I design at present to present to your view, only that resemblance, or rather perfect similarity of parts, of which the languages of all nations are found to consist.—The consideration of these parts, into which all speech, is necessarily divided, and of their general relations and dependencies in the structure of discourse, constitutes the theory of *universal grammar*. On the other hand, the differences which exist between one language and others in the inflexions of their constituent terms, in their connexions with one another, in the formation of sentences, and in their peculiar idioms, which are forms of expression that have grown up by accident and usage, in one nation, but cannot be literally explained, or transferred, into the language of others, are the subject of particular grammar.

In the latter class are embraced both the direct and immediate operations of things, and the passive reception of those operations.—The principal parts of speech, therefore, are the substantive, the adjective, and the verb active, and passive. These must form the basis of every

language, and the chief substance of discourse. But, besides these, an inferior class of words is requisite to the complete form of a sentence, properly called connectives, the office of which is to unite together its various parts, to point out their relations and dependencies, and, in different ways, to modify the expression both of things and their actions. Language, therefore, cannot advance to any considerable degree of improvement without conjunctions, prepositions and adverbs;\* or, instead of them, certain variations in the principal words, indicative of the same circumstances in discourse which they are designed to express.

These being the natural principles on which discourse is formed, the same elements or primary parts must be

\* It has, with great plausibility been conjectured by a very ingenious writer of England, [Mr Horne Tooke] that, originally, discourse was entirely made up of only the noun and the verb; and that those subsidiary parts now embraced under one general denomination of *connectives*, were known at first, under the form of one, or other of the principals. According to this writer any sentence may, by some circumlocution, be expressed wholly in verbs and nouns; and this was its only form, when speech was in its rudest state. Adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions are supposed to have grown out of the endeavor to abbreviate language, and render it a more facile instrument of communication; and when analysed and brought down to their first principles are, in truth, only nouns and verbs reduced to a form more convenient for discourse.



found in all languages. Hence the analogy which prevails in their respective grammars.

The next class of signs consists of those which represent by visible characters, the sounds of which language is composed.—Men desirous to impart their thoughts and feelings to others, who might be placed at too great a distance to receive them by oral communication, or solicitous to transmit them to posterity, and not willing to rely on the fidelity of tradition, must early have sought for some more faithful, and permanent means of recording them.—At first, they would naturally have recourse to such imperfect pictures or representations of visible objects as a rude unpolished age would be capable of depicting. But moral and intellectual ideas could hardly be imparted by this device.

Yet, by means of certain analogies which are supposed to subsist between sensible objects, and correspondent emotions, intellectual conceptions, and moral feelings of the soul, on which figurative language is founded, the field of picturesque writing is greatly enlarged. Thus, an *eagle* has been made an emblem of victory, courage, elevation of mind ;—a *lion*, of strength, magnanimity, imperial rank ;—a *dove*, of mildness, and innocence ;— a *serpent*, like those encompassing the wand of Mercury, of cunning, genius, eloquence ;—a *circle*, of

endless duration ;—a *globe*, of the whole material universe —Medals and allegorical pictures furnish innumerable examples of this analogical imagery ; and the poets abound with a drapery which shews to what extent this species of writing might be carried. Before writing was known to the barbarous nations of Scythia, when one of their princes sent to Darius a pair of wings, a mouse and an arrow, if he had been able to transmit a picture of these objects, it would have equally served to convey to a proud king this formidable defiance ; That, “ unless he could fly in the air like a bird, or hide himself in the earth like a mouse, the Persian arrows would overtake him.”

Painting, however, must still have been a cumbrous, unwieldy and ambiguous mean of recording the growing annals of nations, and the continually increasing improvements of science and the arts. But, in order to render it a more practicable vehicle of knowledge, it would, in time, be found susceptible of considerable abbreviations. The *head* of an eagle might be made to stand for the entire bird ;—the *beak* be used for the head ; even the outline of these figures, and finally a very small portion of the outline, come to represent the whole. In the progress of abbreviation and improvement, it is not improbable that some minute curvature, or complex inflexion, containing ever so remote a resemblance of

some principal or characteristic part of the original figure, and ultimately no resemblance at all, might stand for the object itself. This point in the progression appears to offer a natural introduction to those verbal or idiomatic characters, an example of which still exists in the written language of China, and some of the neighboring nations, which stand, not so much for words, as for the objects or ideas expressed by those words. Hence they have the advantage of conveying to one another intelligibly through the eye, what they could not explain by oral communication. To a very material disadvantage, however, characters of this kind are necessarily subject ; —that, in order to express all the compass and variety of thought in a refined and philosophic age, they must be so numerous as to become extremely burdensome to the memory, and scarcely to be attained except by a few men who have devoted their lives to literary pursuits.

The ultimate improvement of written language consists in the invention of alphabetical characters, which are only the analysis of the sounds used in oral discourse, into their most simple elements, and of the modifications which those sounds receive by the approximations, or contacts, of the different parts of the organs of speech, expressed by visible symbols. The pure emissions of sound are designated by the vowel characters ; the modifications of sound by the symbols of the consonants.

which, being pronounced along with the vowels, produce various modifications of their utterance. It has been made a subject of enquiry among philosophers, if any thing in the process of abbreviating the painted symbols of language is calculated to lead to the invention of alphabetical writing; or, if it must have arisen merely out of some lucky and fortuitous suggestion of thought. Ingenious and reflecting men, perceiving by what brief and simple characters visible objects had come at length to be suggested to the eye, even after they had lost all resemblance to the original pictures from which the process had commenced, might very naturally be led to improve the discovery by employing similar hieroglyphic enigmas for recalling the objects of the other senses. This hint would be sufficient to point out the practicability of expressing by other arbitrary marks every thought of the mind.—Having advanced thus far in exhibiting by visible and arbitrary characters all the objects of discourse, and all the thoughts of the mind, or the words by which those objects and those thoughts are expressed, it would seem no difficult atchievment of invention, afterwards, to divide these words into the simple sounds of which they are composed, and to indicate these also by similar characters. When this analysis is skilfully made, these primary sounds are found to be very few; and therefore the means of exhibiting to the eye, every word or

symbol of thought in the immense circumference of language would be proportionally easy. Whereas, if each word required a separate character to designate it, the number of these signs would overwhelm the memory.—The final accomplishment of an invention so important to the perfection of literature and philosophy, would, doubtless, be the result of one of those happy suggestions of the imagination, on which almost all improvements in science or the arts do originally depend; yet would the way to it have been gradually opened, and the final discovery greatly facilitated, by the series of abbreviations through which it has been seen that the painted symbols of language would naturally pass.

A circumstance which may well excite the attention of the philosopher to investigate its cause is the equality of the number of alphabetical characters in the written language of almost all nations.—This is, in a great measure, the work of nature herself.—The vowels or simple sounds, are necessarily emitted through the wind-pipe, the great passage for the breath. The variations of the vowel sounds, must consequently depend upon the apertures, and lengths or points of impulse, in that tube from which the voice issues. The principal variations arising from these causes can scarcely be more than seven or eight, corresponding, in some measure, with the notes of music: although there may be semitones or inter-

mediate shades of voice, to a greater degree of variety. All nations, therefore, have nearly the same number of principal vowel sounds.—The deepest or broadest sound, which is the French or German *a*, equivalent to *aw* in English, issues from the lowest part of the windpipe posited within the upper region of the breast.—The second, which is the open or short sound of the English *a*, as heard in the word *that*, is formed by an impulse of the voice proceeding from a point a little farther advanced in the organ; that is, by shortening that tube employed in forming the sound one note.—The next note, if I may continue the use of that term, in the progression, is that of the Greek *heta*, or the long and slender English *a*, and is derived from a point still farther projected, accompanied with a still narrower constriction of the tube.—The fourth, which is the long and slender *e* or *ee* of the English, or the French *i*, is emitted from the upper end of the same tube, where it opens with the smallest diameter into the region of the palate. At each grade in this series, both the length and diameter of the trachial tube, are successively contracted.—In the following tones expressed by the English *i*, *o*, and *u*, or the analogous tone of the French *eu*, a similar process is continued. The organ of the voice is prolonged by means of the palatial region, the mouth and the

lips, till, in the last of these sounds, the channel is produced to its utmost length, by a protrusion of the lips.

Between these several notes or tones we can easily conceive a semitone, or even lighter shade of the voice, which appears to multiply the vowel sounds. As examples we may give the various tones of the vowel *a*, in pronouncing the words *that* and *harm*; and of *e* in *the*, and *then*. There are also diphthongal sounds in which two tones are intimately blended, or follow one another in such quick succession as to form but one mass to the ear. But notwithstanding these shades of voice, the principal vowel sounds in all nations must be nearly the same.

As nature has thus provided for the uniformity of the vowel sounds in all languages, she has equally predisposed the organs of speech to a similar uniformity in the consonant modifications of those sounds. These being produced by various contacts, or very near approximations of the different parts of the vocal organs, they are consequently confined to a definite and very limited number receiving their several powers as well as their denominations, from the parts employed in their formation, as *labials*, *dentals*, *palatials*, *gutturals*. These contacts, in the simplest form, can hardly amount to more than fifteen or sixteen, although the consonant characters are more numerous in the written languages of most

nations. This arises, sometimes, from employing different characters to indicate the same modifications, as *c* and *s*, or *c* and *k*, in English, and sometimes by compounding those simple modifications which easily coalesce, as, *ks*, *ds*, *ps*, *ph*, *kh*, *th*, among the Greeks, and indicating the compound by a separate character.—Such appears to have been the gradual progress of the human mind in the invention and perfecting of an art of the highest utility to mankind, and the basis of almost all other arts.—After alphabetical writing had been brought to some degree of perfection, all the previous arts of communication among mankind would, in time, be disused as being infinitely more laborious and obscure. One celebrated example, however, of that by painting, in its abridged and figurative form, long existed in the ancient hieroglyphics of Egypt. The Greeks who frequented the pontifical colleges of that country, in which resided all the science of the age, believed the hieroglyphic to be an art invented by the priests to conceal their knowledge from the common people, or from the prying curiosity of foreign nations. But as this species of writing consisted entirely in symbolic images drawn from the objects of nature, intended to clothe in this sensible drapery their moral and philosophical ideas, it is more probable that it was an art which preceded the invention of alphabetical signs. And having been long employed by the sacerdotal



order, who were also the principal masters of science, to record their literature and their sacred doctrines, it would not be speedily changed for the new, although more convenient, symbols. Being the visible and ancient language, both of their learning and religion, it naturally took a firm hold upon the prepossessions of a body of men devoted exclusively to religious instruction and scientific investigation. In like manner have we lately seen the latin language retained as the vehicle of science, by the learned men of modern Europe, long after the cultivation of their vernacular dialects, had provided them with a more convenient instrument of instruction. It is well known that whatever is connected with the external forms of religion, even by a slight tie, is usually retained with greater perseverance than other customs. —Hieroglyphic symbols degenerated into obscurity only by disuse, while they were still adhered to through ancient usage and prepossession. Inattention to these circumstances, or not ascribing to them their proper weight, has induced the belief, that they were invented by a cunning priesthood, proud of their exclusive learning, solely for the purpose of concealment.\*

\* In these hieroglyphic symbols we probably discover the origin of the animal worship of the Egyptians. The figures of different animals being portrayed in their temples, and exhibited in other public places as symbols of religious ideas,

Having made these observations on the art of communicating, and improving thought by means of vocal, and visible signs, and thereby carrying the intellectual powers of man to their highest perfection, I shall conclude this lecture with a very few general remarks on the invention and progress of other arts. Language, and the means of imparting it to others, and recording it to posterity by visible and permanent symbols, are undoubtedly among the most useful of arts. In taking a brief review of others, many are seen to be derived, in the first place, from the necessities of men. After these have been fully supplied, the natural wish of mankind, when they begin to feel themselves at ease, for more elegant accommodation, and more refined pleasure, will give birth to many more, and awaken the mental faculties to higher exertions. The fruits of these efforts we perceive in the infinitely diversified operations of human skill in polished society, designed for convenience, or ornament; and the refined gratifications of an elegant luxury, when compared with that rudeness which aims merely at the supply of wants of the first necessity, man seems to have advanced into the state of a superior order of beings.

attracted to themselves at last the popular veneration. As the images of saints, in some countries, held up as pious examples to the common people, too often became the objects of their worship.

The necessity of subsistence gives rise, in the savage state, to the arts of fishing and hunting. And, in a state somewhat further advanced, to the herdsman's art, and to that rude and temporary cultivation of the soil which we find among the barbarian nations. And these arrive, at last, in civilized society, to all the perfection, of the most improved agriculture, and care of cattle. As society advances, the necessity of guarding against the encroachments, or assaults, of enemies, gives rise to the various arts of attack and defence. Protection, which was sought at first only by the bow, the javelin, or the war club, comes to be maintained, at length, by every species of offensive and defensive armour, and the various arts of fortification, defence, and assault, which we have seen carried to such perfection in modern civilized warfare.—Interesting examples of the progression of the arts we behold in our clothing, from the skins of animals, which formed the first covering of the savage, to all the various and delicate workmanship of the loom, in our places of lodging and abode; from the first wretched wigwam of the savage hunter, or movable tent of the barbarian herdsman, to the villa, or the palace, adorned, with all the magnificence of structure, the convenience of contrivance, the beauty of arrangement, and the elegance of sculpture. And, to give no other example, in the mechanical arts, from the first rude axe made of a

sharpened flint, or the awkward lever formed to assist the strength of the arm in rolling a fallen piece of timber, to all the ingenious and complicated instruments for aiding the labor of man, and wafting the produce of his industry to the utmost regions of the earth ; for promoting the perfection of all the useful and ornamental arts ; and for perfecting the investigations and improvements of philosophy, from the water wheel which turns the mill, or the steam engine which cleanses the mines, to that immense machinery which measures the heavens, and penetrates, and displays, the whole structure of the universe.

Arts, in the beginning, must have been extremely rude in their execution ; and would often be made merely an appendage to other labors more immediately necessary for subsistence. In nations just emerging from barbarism, it would be long before each art would become a distinct profession, and occupy exclusively the ingenuity and industry of a separate artist. The separation of the arts, and the subdivision of each art into its distinct branches, is necessary to their perfection. And the simpler the division is, which is assigned to the respective workmen in that branch, with the greater beauty, and the greater expedition will the whole be finished.

The improvement of the arts is greatly assisted by the introduction of commerce. Where commercial intercourse and exchange have not been established, each man is under the necessity of supplying himself, by a rude and tedious labor, with the various instruments, or commodities, he may need for his own use. But by a mutual and universal traffic, the surplus labor of one man, which would, otherwise, be useless to himself, may be immediately exchanged with others for the conveniencies which he needs, or would gratify his taste. And the more perfect the execution of the several objects of his art, the higher value would be placed upon them; that is, the greater quantity of the labor of others would be exchanged for them. But this subject, however, has already been touched at in a preceding lecture, and will again come under review in treating of the general objects of civil policy.

In considering human nature as susceptible of improvement, and pointing out its superiority in this respect above that of all other animals, one of its most important and honorable distinctions, is, its power of discovering and connecting the principles of science. This is a capacity of which not any trace seems to be possessed by the brutes; and in man himself it is unfolded only in a very small degree, before his judgment has been matured by time and exercise, and his intellectual faculties

roused and directed by a careful and assiduous culture. The basis of all true science rests on the uniformity of nature in all her operations. The nature of those internal energies, or powers, by which the several effects are produced which are called her phenomena, or appearances, are wholly unknown to the imperfect insight of man; we can distinguish them only by the qualities which they present to the senses. In examining things thus by their sensible qualities, we find a variety in the phenomena which belong to them respectively, and at the same time a perfect uniformity, in those belonging to the individuals of each class of subjects, which are discovered only by experience, and observation. When we perceive the same qualities always exhibiting themselves under the same circumstances, we conclude that there is some power or energy in nature which in the given state will always operate in the same way. The uniformity of the effects indicates a cause in the nature of things from which they flow. The essence of that cause we do not understand; but on the reality of its existence, and the uniformity of its action, we rely with a certainty proportioned to the number of our experiments, or the frequency of our observation. The unknown cause of this uniformity we call a *law* of nature; because it is considered as resulting from the *will* of the Creator, and operating by a certain *rule* prescribed by him in the con-

stitution of things. The phenomena are the effects, and the indications, of this law. Philosophers are continually discovering new classes of these uniformities in physics, and in morals, which are regarded as so many separate laws of nature. These separate laws, when collected together, in their proper order, and connexion, form what is properly called science. The knowledge of particular phenomena may gratify a barren curiosity; but they are of little real use, except, as they tend to establish some general law, which will enable the accurate observer to predict similar effects in all time to come, in similar circumstances, and to depend upon the result. Such general laws alone deserve the name of science, which enables us, by regular deduction, to infer the future, from what we know of the past. And, to the intelligent mind, these general conclusions furnish the only certain rules of conduct, to which man alone of all terrestrial natures is competent.—The discovery of general rules of moral conduct, is the great object of the science of morals. And this, as I have before said, must be derived from an extensive knowledge of human nature, and of the mutual relations of men to one another, and to their creator.

## LECTURE VI.

## CONTENTS.

*Man, who has been considered as a species, now considered as an individual, with the properties of his compound nature,—body and spirit.—Of the spirit.—The question whether the rational and sensitive principles be essentially different from one another.—A more important question, whether the soul be not merely a modification of matter.—Things distinguishable only by their sensible properties, inasmuch as their intrinsic essences cannot be known.—Hence, the two subjects concluded to be totally distinct; and hence the physical proof of the immortality of the soul.—An objection against this proof; and against the soul surviving the body, arising from its being affected by all the diseases, and changes of the body; whence is inferred also, by many writers, its material nature.—Different opinions of philosophers with regard to what is called the material world.—The ideal, and immaterial systems of Berkeley and of Hume.*

HAVING considered man as a species, and taken a cursory view of the properties which distinguish him from other species of animals, I proceed to consider him



in his individual capacity, and briefly to explain the principles which enter into the composition of his nature, with reference chiefly to its moral destinations.—In contemplating the nature of man, what first demands the attention of the philosopher, is its being a compound of body and mind. For whatever controversies may have arisen concerning the primary and ultimate essences of these respective substances, they are certainly, in the aggregates of their several qualities, as exhibited in the body and the soul of man, entirely diverse, if not opposite to one another. The body is a system of organs fitted for receiving the impressions of external objects in such a manner as to make their existence and their qualities sensible to the mind, and for acting upon them again as the mind's instrument. The mind is that external principle which is endowed with the faculty of perceiving, comparing, judging, and reasoning concerning things presented through the senses; and of directing our actions towards them.

With regard to the nature of the mind many disquisitions have been raised. And frequently with an injudicious boldness, which, leaving the plain but tedious road of experience and fact, plunges into the region of conjecture, where philosophy has often wandered, and perhaps, must always wander in inextricable error. Among other enquiries, it has been made a question

whether the rational principle be essentially different from the principle of sensation common to man with the inferior animals; or be the same, with only the added power of reflecting on its own sensations, comparing them, and deriving from them another ultimate sensation which is called its judgment, induction, or conclusion.

Some ancient sects held the rational and sensitive powers in man to be seated in two totally distinct principles,—the one *the soul*, the principle of vitality, or sensation; the other the *spirit*, the principle of reason.\* With this the philosophic opinion of St. Paul seems to coincide, when he divides the departments of human nature into those of the *body*, the *animal soul*, and the *rational spirit* or *mind*.—Most of the moderns esteem the rational and sensitive parts of our nature to be only different powers, inherent in the same simple essence, the *soul*; receiving their denominations from the objects to which they are applied; and the peculiar action of the soul with respect to them.—To take an example from color; the soul, in the act of sensation, simply receives the impression of this quality through the eye; in the exercise of its reasoning powers, it may enter into various enquiries concerning visible properties; as, whether

\* This was the opinion particularly of the Pythagoreans and the Platonists.

they are inherent in bodies, or are merely sensations in us? Whether these sensations have any resemblance to the objects which excite them, or are occasioned by some affections of matter which have no similarity to any sensation? Still the sensation, and the reasoning, are only different modes of acting of the same spiritual substance. On this diversity of opinion we may justly remark, that it is of small importance except to gratify a barren curiosity. When we attempt to pry into the essential constitution of things, a secret which nature hath placed beyond the reach of the human faculties, we dive into a bottomless ocean. We are not sufficiently acquainted with the nature of the inferior animals to know how far they possess the powers of comparison, or induction. And with regard to the spiritual part of our own nature, we know not its essence and texture. We cannot, in explaining its principles, go beyond the simple perceptions of consciousness. And when these are most carefully examined, we do not, in *reasoning* and *sensation*, perceive different agents, but only different exercises of the same sensible and intelligent nature.

But another question of higher moment, because it draws after it more important consequences, is; whether *mind* be essentially, or, in its primary principles, different from *matter*; and whether sensation and thought may not be the result of a certain organization of the body,

producing a peculiar refinement of its secretions, and ultimately a sensitive state, and action of its nerves, and fluids?—That matter is capable of refinement and activity to an indefinite degree, there cannot remain a doubt, since light has been discovered to be a body ; but, that it is susceptible of such a modification as is implied in sensation, and intelligence, must be mere hypothesis ; and one that possesses very lame pretensions to probability, none of the sensible properties of matter, as far as experiments have ever been made upon it, having the smallest analogy to the operations of thought. On the true principles of philosophy, therefore, the opinion which confounds mind with matter ought to be rejected. A more serious objection lies against it in the mind of every good man ; for, if we reduce the soul to the condition of perishable matter, the most reasonable foundation of gratitude to our creator for existence is removed ; the most powerful encouragements to virtue, and restraints from vice, are effectually destroyed, when we lose the natural hopes, and apprehensions of a future being. But a consequence still more fatal results from the principle of the materialism of the soul ; it annihilates the only basis on which can rationally rest the belief of a wise and intelligent creator of the universe. The ideas of a free, essentially active, and intelligent power presiding over the system of nature, can be derived

only from the exercise of similar powers within our own minds. If that active, sensitive, and rational principle which we call the soul, be only an emanation of matter organized in a certain form, all our religious hopes, and duties, are merged in the gloom of an eternal fatality: we induce all the laws of a blind material necessity. For, if the human soul be only a refinement of the corporeal essence; or, in other words, a secretion from the fluids of the body, the divine mind, if we admit its existence at all, can only be conceived to be a result of the physical actions, or elemental secretions of the universal material system—the *anima mundi* of the ancients,—the effect, not the cause, of infinite, unintelligent matter. Some religious men, however, who have embraced the materialism of the soul, have endeavored to rescue themselves from these cheerless consequences by resting the hope of immortality, and the resurrection of the body, and the belief of a moral governor of the universe, on revelation. This appears to be a preposterous jumble of ideas. Certain it is, that the friends of this doctrine are generally enemies of revelation; and there can be little doubt of the tendency of its principles to atheism. No writer, perhaps, has carried these principles out, with more wit and talent, and, I may add, with more audacity, to their ultimate, and legitimate consequences, than the French philosopher Helvetius. How they appear in the

hands of a christian divine, who endeavors to guard them with all the efforts of his ingenuity from their immoral results, we may learn from Dr Priestley's *essay on matter and spirit*.

The doctrine, however, of the perfect and essential difference of mind from matter has ever been received by the greatest, and the most numerous class of philosophers, and seems to rest on the most solid and rational grounds. For, although their essences be not the objects of immediate and direct perception, yet their properties, by which alone we judge of the nature of things, present them to our understanding as being in every respect different, and contrary to one another. The properties of the one we discern only through the medium of the external senses; those of the other are perceived exclusively by the powers of internal sensation, or consciousness. These sensations furnishing the mind with perceptions which are primary and original, their difference, and the different natures of the subjects from which they are derived, can be indicated only in the perceptions themselves. By a law of our constitution, this is the ultimate evidence which we can enjoy on any subject. And when we compare together the properties of body and spirit, what have color, figure, extension, taste, smell, which belong to the former, in common

with thought, volition, sympathy, affection and other purely mental qualities and actions? Body, moreover, we perceive to be composed of parts, separable from, and movable among one another; but, in every act of the mind, we are conscious only of one simple, indivisible essence. The one is naturally inert, and set in movement only by extraneous impulse; the other is self-motive. The actions of the one are governed by mechanical laws; the other is excited in its operations by laws which we perceive to be wholly varient in their nature from those which preside over the material world.—From this diversity, or rather opposition of properties, we infer, that the soul is not of the same substance, with the body; that the one cannot be a mere secretion, or refinement from the other, the result of a peculiar organization; but that they are in their nature and essence, as in their properties, entirely distinct.

From the spiritual and immaterial nature of the soul arises what is called the *physical* proof of its immortality. The destruction of bodies is occasioned by the dissolution, or separation of their parts; or by that rigidity which grows, in time, upon their elastic organs, and, at length, stops their action. The perfect unity, and simplicity, of the spiritual essence, and its natural and inherent activity, seem to place it beyond the sphere of those causes of dissolution which have been ascribed to

matter.—We are not, however, sufficiently acquainted with the nature of the soul to be sure that there may not be other causes which may finally produce an extinction of its active powers. We know that its actions appear to cease on the dissolution of the body. And although we discern no positive reason why it may not exist in a state of separation from the corporeal part of our frame, yet nothing but a direct revelation from the author of our being can ascertain a fact so desirable to all good men. There are, indeed, many moral probabilities of this truth, derivable from other sources, which have contributed to console the virtuous philosopher in other ages, before a clearer light arose to assist his reason. These shall be offered to your consideration in a future lecture. All that I can say of this physical speculation, is, that, although it offers to our reason no solid ground of confidence, it may be regarded as affording some corroboration to other arguments which find a more persuasive access to the heart.

An objection against the argument which we have just surveyed for the immateriality, and consequent immortality of the soul, has been derived from the fact of its being affected by all the changes of health in the body; and from the further fact of the reasoning faculty being sometimes wholly deranged by disease, or the malformation of some of its organs. Whence it is concluded



that, as the soul is dependent for the regularity of its exercises on the state of the body, it derives its existence likewise from the same source; and that, with the cessation of the vital actions, all mental action will equally cease; and the soul will consequently perish in the dissolution of this corporeal system.—The converse of this reasoning will demonstrate its weakness; for it is not more certain that the sound and perfect exercises of the soul depend, in a great degree, upon the healthful state of the body, than that the health of the body is reciprocally affected by the state of the mind. But, would any man pretend to infer that the corporeal part of our nature is, therefore, an emanation from the spiritual, and dependent upon the latter for its existence?—From the intimate connexion established between the different parts of the same nature, we ought to expect to find a mutual influence exerted by each upon the other. The exercises of the soul ought especially to be exposed to derangement in their action from any disorders in the corporeal system, or any mal-formation of its parts. For, the body being the organ of all its sensations, notices, and informations, any error or disorder in these, by perverting, in the same degree, the materials and ground-work of its reasonings, must proportionably impair the clearness of its perceptions, and the justness of its conclu-

sions.\* It resembles a philosopher in his observatory, who is obliged to make use of defective instruments; or a man confined in a prison, who must form his judgment of all things passing around him from those erroneous means of intelligence to which alone he has access. His philosophic acuteness may remain as perfect as ever, but his primary informations being false or incorrect, will throw a necessary error into all his reasonings. Whatever errors, therefore, the infirmity, or disorder of the corporeal organs may introduce into the exercises of the soul, it does not the less preserve unimpaired its title to that immateriality, rationality, simplicity, and immortality of essence which we have ascribed to it. This is certain, that, at the approach of death, when the bodily frame is weakest, but, at the same time, its movements, as frequently happens, are most regular and tranquil—

\* Insane persons more frequently err, perhaps, by some fault in the organs of perception, and the impressions of objects that are conveyed to the imagination, than in the conclusions of the reasoning power founded upon these. The mind may be impaired in the clearness, consistency, steadiness and comprehensiveness of the view it takes of a subject; but commonly, its deductions are more consequential and consistent, than the premises and data, on which they are founded.—The reasoning faculty may be sound, while the organs of the senses and imagination are so disordered, as to occasion all its perceptions, and conclusions to be confused and false.—They may be disordered only on one point, or subject—sometimes they may be alternately healthful and diseased.

least disturbed by disorderly impulses of the senses, the imagination, and the passions,—then the action of the soul has not rarely been found to be most vigorous and clear.

If the soul, in parting from the body at death, presents no sensible indications of itself in assuming a separate existence, this ought not to create any surprize, when we remember that a spiritual and immaterial essence cannot be an object of the senses. Still less ought it to beget any doubt on the subject of a future existence, since there are even material influences of so fine and subtle a nature as to escape all detection of the senses, while they may be accumulated in, or abstracted from different bodies, in the largest quantities. Of these we need no other examples than the familiar ones of electricity and magnetism.

Having made these reflections on the spiritual and immaterial nature of the soul, and on the physical proof arising thence of its immortality, I shall conclude this lecture with presenting to you a brief outline of a scheme which, about half a century since, attracted great attention from the philosophic world, supported by the ingenious names of Berkeley bishop of Cloyne, in Ireland, and the celebrated David Hume of Scotland. As maintained by Berkeley it was opposed to the existence of matter,

and as reformed and carried out to its ultimate consequences by Hume, it was equally hostile both to matter and spirit, filling the universe only with ideas.

The origin of this scheme is to be found in the ancient Aristotelian doctrine of ideas, revived by some of the most celebrated metaphysicians of modern times, and by none with greater authority than the profound and discriminating Locke. It was held almost as an axiom by these great men that *nothing can be perceived where it is not*. Therefore, the only way in which external objects are discerned, is by means of *images*, called *ideas*, or *sensible species*, sent forth on all sides from them, which, impinging on their proper organs, render those objects perceptible to sense. The sensible forms, or ideas of color, figure, sound, emanating from the visible and sonorous bodies around us, impart to us the only conceptions which we possess of these bodies. They are not the objects themselves which are perceived, but the images, forms, or ideas of them, whence their existence is only inferred through the medium of ideas which have no resemblance to the things which they represent. In like manner, ideas of taste, odour, touch, although their objects are immediately present, and act by direct contact with the sense, have no similitude to the causes, or that constitution of bodies, by which they are produced. Yet, by a certain order of nature, they become signs of the existence of

substances which are not themselves the objects of sense, and to which they are no way like.

These were received almost as undisputed principles of the metaphysical philosophy from the age of Des Cartes and Locke. Bishop Berkeley, at first, carried along with the stream of the general opinion, and embracing the system with unhesitating confidence, began to see, at length, ulterior consequences resulting from it, which the first moment had not presented.—If, according to the received philosophy, the ideas, or images in our own minds, are the whole of what we perceive; and if these ideas are only sensations in us, which, strictly and philosophically speaking, have no similitude to any external object, what right, demands this ingenious writer, have we to infer from these premises, the existence of *substances*, or *substrata*, for our ideas, which, it is acknowledged, are not themselves perceived? He concludes, therefore, that their existence is only a philosophical vision; and that ideas and sensations, which are all that we perceive, are all that exist, except the mind which perceives them. The mind, according to his system, is the only real existence in nature, wherein ideas and sensations follow one another in a certain order established by the Deity in the constitution of our nature. And this established order of ideas is the only sensible world with

which we are acquainted. It is the only one which exists ; and when it is not perceived it is nothing.

Mr Hume, pleased with the ingenuity of this reasoning, and equally a disciple of Locke's doctrine of ideas, immediately perceived its tendency to annihilate the spiritual no less than the material world, according to men's vulgar notions, and to reduce all to mere ideas. The very same argument which the bishop employed against the existence of matter, he saw operated with equal force against the notion of spirit. According to the old philosophy, we have no perception of the nature of a spiritual substance, more than of a material. We perceive nothing but our own sensations, and ideas. Why then should we suppose that any thing else exists ?—As Berkeley had pronounced body to be only a collection of co-existing ideas ; Hume regarded the human soul as consisting of successive trains, or collections of ideas, of which self-consciousness is always one. And this habitual, or central idea, forming an essential part of each train, constitutes the identity of the human soul.

Such is a brief outline of the schemes of Berkeley and Hume, than whom two more acute metaphysicians never existed. And if the ancient system of ideas which attained almost oracular authority from the penetrating and discriminating genius of Mr Locke, be admitted, the con-

clusions of these philosophers are irrefutable. The whole fabric, however, is too subtle, and too far removed from the apprehensions of common sense, to be true. The radical error of these visionary systems rests upon a principle which had long held the rank almost of an axiomatic truth in the schools of philosophy ;—that the direct objects of the senses are not external things themselves, but only the images, or ideas of those things. From this principle Hume and Berkeley have drawn the natural results, which were not foreseen by the philosophers who preceded them. But let the common apprehensions of mankind be received as truth ;—that external things are the direct objects of our perceptions, which we contemplate through the medium of the impressions that they make upon the senses, and the whole foundation of the ideal theories is removed. Those theories, which were leading the mind to universal scepticism, were received, at first, with great eclat by the philosophers of Great-Britain, on account of the ingenuity of their authors. But when the charm of novelty began to subside, and the tendency of the principles more clearly to be discerned, the mind soon returned in a retrograde direction to the calm and rational dictates of the common feelings of mankind. A number of ingenious writers, especially in Scotland, soon appeared against these novel doctrines, who studiously labored to set this part of philosophy on its proper

foundation—that common sense which it had deserted. In this field no writer has distinguished himself with greater zeal, ability, and success than Dr Reid of Glasgow, first in his treatise on *the human mind*, and afterwards in his essays on the *intellectual*, and the *active powers of man*. He is particularly admirable for the clearness and comprehension of his views, and the perspicuity of his elucidation. To no author is this branch of science, not to Locke himself, more indebted for its approaches towards perfection.



## LECTURE VII.

## CONTENTS.

*Of the powers and properties of our nature, particularly as connected with its intellectual improvement, and moral destination.—And, first, of sensation.—Of the external senses—of internal—and of secondary sensations.—Of the manner in which the knowledge of external objects is communicated to the mind through the organs of sense.—The explication of certain appearances supposed by ignorance and superstition to be wholly supernatural, and to belong to the spiritual world, but derived only from disordered movements of our sensible organs.—A theory of dreaming derived from nervous motion.*

HAVING taken a general survey of human nature, as composed of body, and spirit, it is requisite, in the next place, to enter into a more particular analysis of the respective powers of each, as they are immediately related to the subject of these lectures. They respect the means by which we become acquainted with the existence, and the nature of the things with which we are surrounded; the emotions of our minds towards them arising from their several qualities, and their adaptation to our feelings;

—the classes into which they are grouped, or pictures in which they are arranged by the power of imagination for our instruction and entertainment;—the inferences which we derive for the direction of our conduct from comparing, dividing, combining them through the operation of the reasoning faculty;—the affections of the soul called up by them, which are among the principal motives of human conduct through the agency of the will, the immediate principle of action;—subject, in an accountable nature, like that of man, to that sense of morality which, in the order of nature, is intended to govern all our conduct towards other intelligent beings.

The spiritual and corporeal parts of human nature are so closely united, or so intimately blended, that they are mutually affected by their reciprocal action. And it is not easy, in the operations of such a compound substance, to discriminate, at all times, those which peculiarly belong to the influence of the one, or of the other. Yet would this discrimination, often, be highly important, not only to the metaphysician, but especially to the physician, and the divine. The skilful physician will frequently have occasion to vary his remedies according as he apprehends the seat of a disease to reside chiefly in the body, or the mind. And there are many cases in which a judicious and honest divine might be relieved from much embarrassment, or mistake in the pastoral

advice, or consolations he is called to administer to his flock, by perfectly understanding the human economy, and being able to distinguish superstitious or enthusiastic impressions from genuine piety, and nervous sympathies from the hopes and fears of rational religion. I shall not attempt to ascertain the precise limits of their respective influences. We are not yet sufficiently acquainted with the secrets of nature to trace them to any considerable extent with minute accuracy. In the operations of the sensitive, intellectual, and moral departments of the human constitution, there are, perhaps, none that solely and exclusively belong to the corporeal, or the mental. Almost every human action partakes of a mixed nature, inclining in various degrees, chiefly to the influences of the one, or of the other. In their great outlines they are often clearly distinguished; but in their finer and more delicate features, it is impossible nicely to trace what may be ascribed solely to our material organization, and what to the pure influence of the mind. Some additional lights may be incidentally thrown on this obscure subject in pursuing the analysis already hinted at, of the powers of our nature. They may be comprehended under the heads of sensation,—of sentiment,—of imagination,—of reasoning,—of reflection,—of volition—and of the moral principle.

Of these the first in its exercise, and in the order of human knowledge, is sensation: which, as it is derived either from outward objects, or from the action of the mind itself, is denominated external, or internal.—External sensation is that perception which we have of objects without the mind, and their qualities, through the instrumentality of the corporeal organs of sense.—Internal sensation on the other hand, is the perception we have of the operations of our own minds by the inward power of consciousness. All the knowledge which we can have of the nature of color, flavor or figure in external objects is derived from our sensations, and accompanies, by the constitution of our frame, the impression made by those objects upon the organs of sense. Each of those perceptions consists of a simple and ultimate idea, and can be explained by no artifice of language except by referring to our own sensations. In like manner we understand the nature of those operations of the soul which we call thought, volition, doubt, belief, desire, envy, hatred, love, gratitude, sympathy, and all others of the same class, by a direct and immediate perception or feeling of consciousness, when proper objects or occasions occur to excite them; of which no other account can be given than, that such is the constitution of man, that in certain situations and relations in which we may be posited to other beings

and things, such perceptions or mental actions do naturally arise. Our own consciousness in the exercise of these acts is all the knowledge we have, or explanation that can be given of their nature. Our perceptions, therefore, of these operations of the mind, have been justly denominated *internal sensations*. Like our external senses, they furnish the ultimate ideas we can attain of their objects. And by them the internal world of thought is understood, as by the former we become acquainted with the external properties of material things.

Internal sensation, however, has received a more extensive signification by several metaphysical writers, and been made to include the perception of certain qualities in external objects accompanied with agreeable or disagreeable emotions, besides the mere properties of color, dimension, figure, motion, or sound. Such are the perceptions of grandeur, beauty, proportion, harmony, and all those finer classes of ideas which occupy the regions of taste. By many ingenious critics they have received the general denomination of *secondary sensations*; because, although they impart simple, original and ultimate ideas as well as those of external sensation; yet they contain in them something additional to the primary indications of sense, and dependent upon them; but at

the same time, intimately connected with the finer powers of imagination and intelligence.

Having given this comprehensive analysis of the senses, both external and internal, I shall hereafter treat of them separately. But before entering on this detail, I shall offer to you some further reflections on the external senses, their nature, and the manner in which they impart the knowledge of their objects to the mind.

Through these primary inlets of our knowledge are introduced the only notions which we can receive of the nature, and the sensible properties of things: they afford us likewise, the only adequate proof we possess of the existence of an external world. The impressions of outward, and material objects upon the organs of sense, excite within us ideas of themselves accommodated to their respective natures, at least so far as it is the design of our creator that we should understand them. And these ideas are, at the same time, accompanied with a conviction of the reality of external objects; which are conceived to exist independent of our perceptions of them, and distinct from the properties by which they are exhibited to the senses. It is the admission of this principle which distinguishes what may be called the *substantial*, from the *ideal* theory. The substantial philosophers acknowledge that the essence which gives

support to the properties perceived by our senses, does not resemble any of these properties, and is not itself an immediate subject of sense. Their antagonists then demand why we should believe its existence? To which no other reply can be made than that such belief is an irresistible dictate of nature. We are as strongly led by the constitution of our nature to believe in the reality of an external world, as to believe in the existence of our ideas. And the truth is, when we examine into the foundation of our belief of the one, or of the other, it is simply the effect of the constitution of our natural frame, and the appointment of our creator. We have no other reason to assign for believing the axioms, or first truths of science, which are the clearest and most evident of all propositions. If we deny them, we have no basis for certainty on any subject.—The belief of them is a necessary and irresistible persuasion, or assurance resulting from the frame of our nature; and embraces equally the reality of our sensations, and of the objects by which they are excited.

It has long exercised the ingenuity of philosophers to explain the means by which the notices of external things are communicated to the mind through the organs of sense; or to assign a reason why the impulse of a ray of light upon the retina of the eye, or of a pulse of air on the drum of the ear, should produce the sensation of

color, or of sound. It is generally admitted to be by the instrumentality of the nervous system, which may be regarded as an expansion of the brain distributed in these fine and delicate filaments to every part of the body. But by what peculiarity in the structure of a nerve, or by what operations of the nervous system, the several indications conveyed by the respective senses are made, is a secret too deeply laid up among the mysteries of nature, to be disclosed by the present improvements in philosophy. It has been supposed by some writers that the impressions made by external objects upon the nerves are conveyed by them as natural conductors to the brain, the ultimate seat of sensation; or, as it has been expressed by others, the presence chamber of the soul, where she contemplates all objects as they present themselves to her, by means of their representative impressions.—That most ingenious metaphysician, Dr Hartley, and the disciples of his theory, attempt to explain this phenomenon by certain modes of motion, or vibration in the various departments of the nervous system, proceeding to and from the respective organs of sensation. Each object affecting the sense excites its distinct and primary vibration, or its secondary and minor tremors, dependent on the first, denominated by Dr Hartley *vibratiuncles*, which awake their correspondent ideas in the mind.—But still, how that *impression*, or



that *vibration* reaches the sensitive, and intellectual principles of our nature, and becomes the efficient cause of our ideas, is as far removed from our understanding, as profoundly locked up among the arcana of nature, as was the cause of sensation without the supposition of any intermediate mean. It is the action of matter upon spirit, which yet remains unexplained; and is, perhaps, inexplicable to the limited penetration of the human mind.\* But let the principle be admitted, which carries with it, at least, strong probability, that all our sensations are connected with certain affections of the nerves, and are immediately occasioned by them, whether we call those affections by the name of impressions, or vibrations, or by any other denomination, and although we may be entirely unacquainted with the specific mode of their action, and even be ignorant how any mode of nervous action can be productive of sensation, or become the exciting cause of thought, yet the *fact*, that all sensation is connected with and derivable immediately from certain forms of vibration in the nerves, will assist us in solving some phenomena which have generally been considered as among the most inscrutable in the intellectual

\* Dr Hartley, indeed, supposes sensibility to be a property of matter, dependent, for its living power, on a certain organization, and internal spring of action. On this principle he thinks he finds less difficulty in connecting thought with nervous vibration.

world. Among others, the idle tales of spectres, and apparitions of various kinds, the offspring of ignorance, and fear, nursed by superstition, may often be simply and naturally explained by it, in consistency with the known laws of human nature, when they are not the result, as too frequently they are, of deliberate knavery and imposture. It may assist us also in explaining the desultory, and irregular phenomena of dreaming.

The nerves consisting of very vibratory\* strings, or elastic filaments, easily excited into movement by an infinite variety of external impulses, or internal agitations, if their motions, vibrations, or other affections are the immediate causes of sensation, according to this theory, then, by whatever impulse any motion, vibration, or affection in the nervous system is produced, a correspondent sensation, or train of sensations or ideas in the mind, will naturally follow. When the body is in regular health, and the operations of the mind are in a natural and healthful train, the action of the nervous system

\* Some respectable writers deny the vibratory motion of the nerves, ascribing to them rather a perpendicular movement through their whole length, agreeing, however, in the general principle that sensation is produced by some mode of nervous motion as its immediate cause. The reader who embraces that hypothesis may substitute his own peculiar opinion, or mode of expression, for the vibratory motions supposed in the text. The result of the reasoning will be the same.

being affected only by the regular and successive impressions made upon it by the objects of nature as they successively occur, will present to the mind just and true images of the scenes that surround it. But by various species of infirmity and disorder in the body, the nerves, sometimes in their entire system, and sometimes only in those divisions of them which are attached to particular organs of sense, may be subjected to very irregular motions or vibrations. If any vibrations be excited in them similar to those which would be created by the actual presence, and impression of external objects of any form, or quality, unreal images of the same qualities and forms will be raised in the mind. Examples in illustration, or proof of this fact may be adduced from each of the senses. Light may seem to flash from the eye in consequence of a stroke. The ear may often be vexed by unreal sounds, and the eye by unsubstantial visions. The state of the nervous affections may be vitiated by intemperate indulgence, or by infirmity resulting from sedentary, and melancholy habits. Superstitious fancies, or enthusiastic emotions, do often greatly disturb the regular action of the nervous system. Such elastic and vibratory strings, may be subject to an infinite variety of irregular movements, sometimes in consequence of a disordered state of health, and sometimes arising from peculiarity of constitutional structure,

which may present false, and often fantastic images to the mind. Sometimes a violent concussion on the head, or a lunatic affection of the brain, or the delirium of a fever, may produce such an irregular state of nervous action as to fill the imagination with wrong, imperfect, and confused conceptions, which become the cause of all the disorders that mark the discourse, and conduct of persons affected by these maladies. For, in madmen, and persons under the influence of a delirium, it is not so much the reasoning faculty that is impaired, as the sensitive powers which are disordered; and, presenting false images to the mind, become the occasions of its erroneous conclusions.—The errors of reason, in such cases, it is true, frequently arise from the rapidity and confusion of images crowding upon the fancy, which deprive it of the power of fair leisurely comparison, and of forming its inductions from a complete possession and survey of its ideas.

But returning from this train of reflection, permit me to offer to your consideration a few examples of false impressions, apparently arising from some of the causes which have been just suggested. You may not rarely meet with persons of enfeebled frames, or sedentary habits, who, suddenly rising from continued reading, or intense thought, have, by the irregular and vacillating movement communicated by the effort to the brain, and

optic nerve, perceived repeated gleams of light flashing around them. But no cause, perhaps, produces a more anomalous oscitancy or vibration of the nervous system, or of some particular portions of it, than habits of intemperate indulgence. And I have not unfrequently become acquainted with men who had been addicted to such excesses, who were troubled with apprehensions of supernatural apparitions. A peculiar imbecility of constitution, however, created by study, retirement, or other causes, may be productive of similar effects. And sometimes these nervous anomalies are found in men who are otherwise of active and athletic constitutions. But where they possess enlightened minds and vigorous understandings, such visionary tendencies may be counteracted by their intellectual energies. Yet have we sometimes known the strongest understandings overcome by the vivacity of nervous impression, which, frequently, is scarcely inferior to the most lively ideas of sense. This may, especially, be the case in two very opposite conditions; either, when the body has fallen into a gloomy temperament, and the mind is weakened by fears, in which case it is oppressed by distressful apprehensions;—or, on the other hand, when the nerves, the primary organs of sensation, are strained into an unnatural tension, and the whole system is exalted by an enthusiastic fervor to the pitch of delirious intoxication. When a man

is exalted to such a degree of nervous excitement, and mental feeling, his visions are commonly pleasing, often rapturous, and sometimes fantastic; but generally rise above the control, or correction of the judgment. The younger Lord Lyttleton, in the vision which he believed he saw of his deceased mother's form, shortly before his own death, may be an example of the former; and the Baron Von Swedenburg, in his supposed visions, sometimes of angels, and sometimes of reptiles, may be an instance of the latter.

It is of importance to remark, that the imagination which, according to this theory, is waked into action by nervous vibrations, and is furnished by their instrumentality with the materials of all the pictures, real or imaginary, which she is perpetually forming, has also a powerful reaction on the nervous system. According to its present tone, whether affected by superstitious dread, by melancholy terror, or enthusiastic rapture, or by any other strong and sudden impulse, it appears to have the power of recommunicating those vibratory motions to the nervous system which tend to giving complete form to those incipient images in the mind that correspond with its actual state of excitement; especially in persons whose fancies have been much disturbed in early life by the tales of nurses, and other follies of an injudicious

education. The tenseness and force of the vibrations in the nerves attached to the respective organs of sense created by these vivid emotions of the mind and fancy, give intenseness to every sensible impression. Whence sounds will be augmented to the ear, and images be made more glaring to the eye. Take for an example, the effect of some unknown and frightful object in the dark, on a timid and superstitious mind. Its fears are alarmed; they seize upon the imagination; the indefinite outline of some terrible image is suggested to it, according to the accidental state of feeling at the moment. Immediately, the imagination, which is always prone to give shape to its images, bodies forth some direful form. As soon as the first alarm has awaked this picture-working faculty, it instantly creates before the mind an image, which is only the completion of the confused and indefinite form which began to be traced, in consequence of the original shock. And, by its reaction on the nerves, gives to the portrait of the fancy a sensible subsistence, and a name. The pictures created by an enthusiastic temperament are generally of a cheerful kind; those resulting from a melancholy superstition, are more gloomy; but both are explicable by the same, or a similar analysis of the operations of nature.\*

\* One or two examples of known facts may contribute to render our ideas on this subject more intelligible, and to justify

**This hypothesis, in the next place, that sensation, and with it the perception of external objects, is produced by means of nervous vibrations or impressions, if it have a just foundation in nature, may assist us also in explain-**

the principles on which we have proceeded in our illustration. I knew some years ago, a very worthy lady who, anxiously watching by the cradle of a sick infant, and momentarily expecting its death, felt, as she believed, just before it expired, a violent stroke across the back of both her arms. From a tincture of superstitious apprehension infused in her early education, and unacquainted with any natural cause of such a phenomenon, she construed it into a preternatural signal of the death of her child. It was probably a sudden and convulsive contraction of the muscles in that part of the system, occasioned by the solicitude of her mind, and the fatigue of watching, which, aided by imagination in a very interesting moment, produced a shock that had to her the feeling of a severe concussion. That a convulsive contraction should take place in those particular muscles, need not appear strange to those who know how irregular and uncertain, is the whole train of nervous action, especially under the operation of some disorders of the body; and frequently, under the influence of strong affections and emotions of the mind.

A young lady, who was peculiarly susceptible of the impressions of fear in the dark, or at the sight of any of the accompaniments of death, attended the funeral of one of her intimate companions, who had died of the small pox. On the following night she lodged in company with a female friend of great firmness of mind. Waking in the night some time after the moon had risen, and faintly enlightened her chamber, the first object that struck her view was a white robe hanging on



ing many of the phenomena of dreams. This world of light chimeras, with its infinite irregularities, which can never be reduced to any rule, has attracted the investigation of many philosophers, to discover, if possible, its

the tall back of a chair, and a cap placed on the top. Her disturbed imagination instantly took the alarm; and in her agitation and terror, rousing her companion, she exclaimed violently that her deceased friend was standing before her. The lady, with great presence of mind, brought the articles of clothing, which had caused the alarm, and thus composed her fears. After she had become tranquil, and was able distinctly to recal her sensations, she declared that the perfect image of the deceased, just as she was dressed for her coffin, seemed to be before her sight. She contemplated it as long as her fears would permit her, before she exclaimed. She was sure that she recognized every feature of her friend, and even the pits of the small pox, of which she died, in her face. And she affirmed that before any tribunal, she would have been willing to make oath to this fact.

I have introduced this anecdote merely to illustrate the power of the imagination by its reaction on the nervous system, to complete the pictures that any sudden impulses of the senses, occasioned by surprize, or by superstitious, or enthusiastic feeling, have begun to form.—It is not a solitary anecdote of the kind. But I have selected it, because I am more perfectly possessed of the circumstances, than of many others that are circulated through certain classes of society.—Nor are these classes always to be found among the most ignorant and credulous,

The story of lord Lyttleton's vision has been variously committed to tradition. There are some circumstances, however,

causes and its laws. I shall omit taking notice of the various theories which have been advanced on this subject by different writers, and content myself with briefly suggesting that solution of the phenomena which

in which all the narrations, that have been published, concur. His lordship was a man who had worn down to a very feeble state, a lively and elastic constitution, and impaired a brilliant wit, by voluptuous and intemperate excesses. A few days before his death he imagined that he saw before him the perfect resemblance of his deceased mother, who denounced to him that on such a day, and at a prescribed hour, he should die. Under a constrained vivacity, his mind, during the interval, was evidently much agitated. And on the predicted day, and at the prescribed time, he actually expired.

This fact has been regarded by many persons, and those by no means of inferior understandings, as a decisive proof of the reality of apparitions from the spiritual world; and by others has been attempted to be resolved on a variety of different grounds.—The principles suggested in the text may, perhaps, serve to explain it in conformity with the known laws of human nature, if the theory of nervous vibration be admitted to be true, without resorting to the solution of supernatural agents. The irregular and convulsive motions in the nervous system which frequently arise from long continued habits of intemperate indulgence, might be especially expected in a constitution so irritable and debilitated as that of lord Lyttleton. If, either sleeping, or waking, or, in that indefinite interval between sleeping and waking, their disordered movements could present to the fancy, or excite in the visual nerves, the distinct image of a living person apparently resuscitated from the dead, which has been shewn to be a possible case, the debilitated frame of

seems naturally to arise out of the hypothesis which has just been offered to your consideration.—As sensation, according to this theory, is occasioned by certain vibrations, or motions in the nerves attached to the respective

his lordship, agitated as it must have often been, by the conscious apprehensions of his approaching end, may naturally be supposed to have predisposed them to such a vision. Conscience, notwithstanding his assumed gaiety, somewhat perturbed by the fears of death, and with the recollection of a pious mother, whose anxious admonitions had often endeavored in vain to recal him from his vices, and to fix his thoughts on his future existence, might naturally retrace her features in this formidable vision. It is not improbable that the whole scene may have been a kind of waking dream. Or if it was wholly transacted in sleep, it might have been with such a forcible and vivid vibration or impulse of the nerves, concerned in the formation of such an image, as would give it the distinctness and vivacity of waking sensation.—In the tumult of his spirits, and the fear-excited vibrations of his whole system, it is not strange that the image of that disappointed and reproaching parent, should be presented to him with a solemn and foreboding aspect. And it would be adding only one trait of terror to the scene already so well prepared to admit it, and one that is perfectly conformable to our experience of the desultory images of dreaming, as well as what we have learned of similar visionary impressions,—that a particular period should be denounced to him for his death, the symptoms, and presages of which, in all probability, he frequently felt in the tremors and palpitations of a breaking constitution. The principal difficulty in the minds of those who have only carelessly attended to this history, is to account for the exact correspondence of the event of his death, to the time fixed by the prediction, if it had no

organs of sense; those vibrations, or emotions, howsoever excited, will create similar ideas or sensations to those which would arise from the actual presence of any external objects exciting the same. During our waking

other foundation than nervous impression.—The imagined prediction itself, was sufficient, in a debilitated and exhausted constitution, like that of lord Lyttleton, to produce its own accomplishment. Seizing upon his fears, in spite of his reason and philosophy, for a life of dissipation and sensual excess, generally, very much weakens the powers both of the mind, and of the body, it would naturally throw his whole system into great commotion. These perturbed and tumultuous agitations would increase as the destined moment approached, till the strength of nature failing, may well be supposed to break at the point of extreme convulsion; that is, at the expected moment of death.

To a case analogous in many respects, to that of his lordship, there are many witnesses still living in the city of Philadelphia. The contrast in the issue of the latter, serves to confirm the solution which has just been given of the former.—Mr Edwards, a clergyman of the baptist persuasion in that city, of a tendency somewhat addicted to melancholy in his habit, but, otherwise, of a vigorous constitution, had, like lord Littleton, a visual impression, so clear and distinctly defined that he mistook it for a supernatural messenger from the spiritual world to announce to him that, at the end of a certain period, he should die. He was so persuaded of the reality of the vision and the verity of the prediction, that he took leave of his particular friends, and of his congregation, before the appointed day. On the evening of this day I saw his house filled with spectators and enquirers, awaiting with solicitude the catastrophe of this extraordinary

hours we are generally exposed to the impressions only of those actual substances which surround us. These, in a sound and healthy state of the body, preserve the nervous system in that just excitement, and that regular

affair. The tumults of his whole system, his difficult respiration, his quick and tremulous pulse, and its frequent intermissions, led many to announce, at various times, during that evening, to the surrounding spectators, that he was just expiring. And without doubt, if his frame had been as weak and delicate as his nervous system, he could not have survived the agitations, and, I may say, almost convulsions, into which he was thrown. And here would have been another prediction, and another supernatural appearance, as extraordinary as those of lord Lytton. But his constitution triumphed. And he remained a monument to prove the force of nervous illusion, which, in this case, as doubtless it has proved in many others, appears to have given birth to an image as clear and definite as could have been produced by the actual presence of such an object as was supposed to have created it.—I would hardly have ventured to relate such an anecdote, if there were not ample testimony to its verity still existing. The good man was so ashamed of his delusion, and it so much lessened his credit with his spiritual flock, that he was obliged to leave the city, and the church where he had formerly been highly esteemed, and retire to a remote position in the country. Many anecdotes to confirm the reality of *nervous sensation*, if I may apply that phrase to designate those *sensible perceptions* which are sometimes raised in the mind, without the presence or aid of external objects, must have occurred to those who have had extensive opportunities of practically observing human nature.—With several persons I have been acquainted, and, those by no means of inferior understanding, who have been firmly persuaded of the ex-

movement which is most favorable to a proper representation of the truth of things. In sleep the excitability of the nerves, though in general very much allayed, is still preserved. Like the brain from which they origin-

istence of the spectres indicated by such *nervous* affections, and have, on some occasions, held conversations with them, real on their part, imaginary on the part of the supposed spectre. Such perhaps, in general, are the disciples of the baron Von Swedenburg. But illusions of this nature are not confined to this class of men alone.

Dr Van Cleve, of Princeton, was lately applied to as a physician, on behalf of a man who had reduced himself by intemperance, to a state of very distressing nervous irregularity. He was continually disturbed by visions, sometimes of the most frightful, and sometimes of the most fantastic kind. He often heard strange voices; and would ask, and answer questions, as if engaged in conversation with some of his visionary personages. His disorder, the doctor said, was evidently not of that species which is usually denominated mania, but appeared to be wholly the effect of a habit of nervous irregularity induced by previous intemperance. But the baron Von Swedenburg, in his most visionary moments, was never surrounded by more extraordinary assemblages of strange sights.

A very striking example of the power of nervous impression occurred a few years ago in the Rev. James Wilson, formerly assistant minister, with Dr Rodgers, in the first presbyterian church in New-York. He was a native of Scotland, and was a man highly esteemed for his good sense, and the soundness of his judgment; although not distinguished for a warm and popular eloquence. Being obliged for a time to relinquish the

etc, they are always in motion. Their motions are chiefly influenced by the internal state of the corporeal system, when the action of external objects is suspended. And the internal state of the body again is subject to

exercise of his ministry from a hemorrhage in his breast, he employed himself for several years in different occupations in Scotland and America, but chiefly in presiding over an academy in Alexandria in the state of Virginia. The expectoration of blood having ceased for a considerable time, his conscience began to reproach him for indolence and self-indulgence in not renewing his ministerial functions. In this uneasy state of mind, a vision, as he thought, of a man of very dignified aspect, stood at the foot of his bed in the morning, after he was perfectly awake, and surveying him steadily, for some moments, commanded him to resume his duties in the pulpit : but added, that as considerable error had crept into the church, he should undertake to reform it according to the model of the primitive age. Mr Wilson, conscious of his want of eloquent talents, and reforming zeal, reasoned with the supposed apparition, alledging his utter incompetency to the task imposed upon him. The dialogue ended in a repetition of the command, and assurance of ability and success. The good man, wholly unable to explain this clear and palpable vision, on any principles of nature, or philosophy with which he was acquainted, was deeply distressed ; yet, perfectly sensible of his insufficiency for such an undertaking, he neglected attempting to fulfil it. After an interval of two or three years, the vision was repeated, with nearly the same circumstances ; except, that the aspect of the person who appeared to present himself, was more severe, and expressive of displeasure at his past delinquency. Mr Wilson repeated his former reasonings on his want of health, and want of talents, with other topics. But the answer was

innumerable, and anomalous varieties, arising from variations of health and spirits, from antecedent impressions, and a multitude of causes which human sagacity has in vain attempted to analyze. But, pursuing the

still the same, a repetition of the injunction, and assurance of the necessary ability, and ultimate success. His distress was raised to the highest degree, in the conflict of his mind between what he thought a sensible demonstration of a supernatural requisition, and an invincible consciousness of his own incompetency, and his fear of doing an injury to the interests of true religion by his failure. After consulting several of his friends upon the subject, he, at length, addressed a letter to the author, stating all the circumstances which have just been detailed. He was answered with the general reasonings contained in this lecture to convince him that his vision was merely a consequence of nervous affection, resulting from bodily disorder. Three letters passed between Mr Wilson and the author; reasoned on the part of Mr Wilson with great calmness and good sense, admitting all the objections to such an apostolic undertaking as that to which he was urged, both from scripture, and from his own peculiar deficiency of power, and talents; but pleading the impulse of a sensation as clear and strong, and, to his mind, as real as he had ever felt.—But it was replied, that there were other considerations combined with the whole system and harmony of nature, which ought to have greater authority with a rational mind than any single, and individual impression of sense, which evidently violates its general order. The correspondence came to this issue at last, that, as he agreed with the church as she now exists in most of her doctrines, and especially in the moral precepts of religion, he should begin his course by inculcating only those principles in which all were agreed; and if he found the promise of his vision verified in



theory of nervous sensitive vibration, already proposed; every vibration must be accompanied with some incipient, or transient sensation; though much fainter in general than that which is connected with any waking action of the nerves. And each vibration of these fine, elastic filaments, is commonly obliterated or checked by the succeeding, as fast as these irregular and transient motions follow one another. Hence the sensations excited in sleep, and the consequent operations of the mind, are as desultory and irregular as nervous action in that state. The train of perceptions is not kept up by the regular succession of external objects, nor the course of thought regulated by the active direction of the will. In sleep the energy of the will over the movements of the body, or over the order of objects presented to the senses, and the current of mental reflection, is entirely suspended. The mind is, therefore, left merely to the unconnected impulse of nervous excitement.—This excitement, however, is sometimes so feeble as not to leave any trace upon the memory. Sometimes, at waking, we are able just to catch some vanishing traces of an image that seems to have been more distinctly formed in sleep.

his returning strength, and successful eloquence, he would then have encouragement to proceed farther. He actually came to New-York with the intention to put this experiment into execution; but died in that city shortly after his landing. He published one discourse introductory to the design.

Frequently, when an image has been half formed, or a sleeping landscape partly sketched out, a new impulse has broken the continuity of the picture, and hurried the imagination into another scene. If the nervous vibrations are at sometimes very faint, so as to produce small excitement on the powers of sensation and imagination, at other times they are lively and strong, and create a very vivid picture in the fancy that will be distinctly remembered afterwards. And, by the reaction of the imagination, which has before been spoken of, upon the brain and nervous system, the presence of one lively idea will frequently excite a whole connected train of vibrations, and with them a connected train of images, presented before the fancy, and sometimes even before the reasoning faculty; especially if intense, and continued thought during the day, has impressed on the nervous system an habitual tendency to certain movements. This regularity of imagery, or thought, may continue till some other desultory vibration break in upon the train to diversify it, or divert the mind to new fancies; or till the torpor of sleep, seizing more deeply on the system, relax its action, and sink the whole for a time in oblivion.

Some constitutions, by their natural structure, and some by induced habits, become much more irregular, and desultory, more tense or lax, more quick or languid, in their nervous movements than others. This will ac-

ordingly have a various influence on their perceptive, or their visionary powers, and tendencies, either sleeping or waking. The precise nature and degree of those influences and tendencies, it is beyond our present knowledge of the interior of the human frame to point out. But, there can be no doubt, that, by various kinds of bodily disorder, they may be greatly augmented. And the vivacity of nervous vibration may, in the absence of all sensible objects, be sometimes increased to the degree of actual vision, hearing, or feeling ; so that, in light sleep especially, or in the interval between sound sleep and the perfect self-possession of complete exsuscitation, it may often be difficult or impossible, to distinguish a dream or half waking vision of this kind, from the clearest impression of sense.—This is the more likely to take place, if the mind has been extremely agitated on any particular subject which has deeply interested its passions, especially those of grief or of fear. For taking firmer than others upon the constitution, and acting with a more fixed and continued impression, they create an habitual tendency to strong, and irritable movements, and to gloomy images.

Although hypothesis can never afford to the philosopher a sure basis for solving the phenomena of nature, yet does the doctrine of nervous vibration, being the proxi-

mate cause, or medium of sensation, afford so easy and natural an explanation of the phenomena of dreaming, as well as those of spectral apparitions, as to yield an additional confirmation of the truth of the principle.

## LECTURE VIII.

## CONTENTS.

*Of the external senses.—Of smelling,—tasting,—touch,—  
hearing,—seeing.*

AS all our knowledge is originally introduced into the mind through the avenues of the senses, I have already taken a general view of the principle of sensation in the human constitution, and proposed a hypothetical theory concerning the mode in which the ideas of external objects are conveyed by these organs to the common sensory. I have afterwards attempted, on the principles of this theory, the solution of two curious phenomena that frequently occur in the operations of the spiritual part of our nature, when the regular action of the external senses is either perverted by disease, or entirely suspended in sleep.—The former consisting of false impressions on the senses; and the latter of the very common operation of dreaming: both of which are explained by what may be called *nervous sensation*, in contradistinction to *external sensation*, or the natural action of the external senses.

But it is time to go into a more particular analysis of these several organs of information, with their modes of

action, and transmitting their different kinds of intelligence from the external world to the soul.

#### OF THE SMELL.

The lowest, perhaps, of our external organs of sensation in point either of the importance of its informations, or the pleasures it affords, is the smell. Yet is it the source of many agreeable and exhilarating sensations ; and while we are surveying the fine landscapes of nature, it often serves greatly to augment the innocent gratifications which we derive from ten thousand varied objects through all the other senses. It is, by the goodness of the creator, frequently intended simply to contribute somewhat to our pleasures, and thereby to promote the enjoyment of existence,—as in those odoriferous flowers and gums which scent the air, diffusing round them their delightful fragrance. Sometimes it is benignantly intended as a guard to our health, by indicating the salutary along with the agreeable qualities of food ; or by being offended with putrid and noxious exhalations. The olfactory nerves, by the beneficent wisdom of the creator, terminating in the nostrils, through which we are continually inhaling the atmosphere impregnated with its odoriferous effluvia, the smell seems to be placed like a sentinel in advance, and always at his post, to watch either for our pleasure, or our safety. By the

admirable structure of the vessels in the nostrils, appointed to guard the termination of the olfactory nerves, they are so constituted as to take up from the atmosphere in its passage, only its odorous effluvia, repelling, at the same time, every other substance which enters those channels.—As the organ of this sense opens immediately into the region of the palate, and the tongue, we find that the smell has, in many respects, a considerable affinity with the taste; which is the sense next in the order in which I have proposed to treat of the sensitive portion of our system.

#### OF THE TASTE.

The sense of taste is that power which resides in the tongue, as its organ, of perceiving the flavor, or relish of the sapid objects applied to it. The same difficulty attends the explanation of this as of the other senses;—to understand how the application of any substance to the external organ can convey its appropriate sensation to the mind. The probability is that it effects the purpose of nature by some modes of motion, vibration, or alternate contraction and expansion in the nerves belonging to the tongue. And anatomists have discovered that its superior surface is filled with small conical protuberances, which occasion its peculiar roughness, and having openings at the top like mouths, in the centre of which are very fine papillæ that seem to be the terminations of

nerves destined to convey the sensations of taste to the common seat of perception. These papillæ appear to be variously moved and agitated on the application of any pungent substance to them. Thus far we can trace the process of taste by actual experiment and observation. But here we must stop. The farther connexion between these nervous movements, and sensation, eludes the penetration of the human mind.

The natural pleasures, and pains, or disgusts of taste, which are such as affect us before the relish has suffered any considerable alteration by habit, are usually indications of what is salutary, or noxious in food. We may justly regard it as one proof of the benignity of the creator, and his attention to the happiness of man, that he has annexed the pleasures of taste to the demands of appetite, when sustenance is necessary, or useful; and, not less so, that he has caused indifference, or satiety to follow its gratifications, when further indulgence would be injurious. It deserves to be remarked, however, that nature only in her undepraved simplicity verifies these reflections. For taste, it is known, by a too common experience, may be so perverted, by vicious habits, as to disrelish wholesome food, and solicit what is noxious; and the appetites of hunger and thirst may be depraved to such a degree as importunately to urge men to the excesses both of gluttony and intoxication. But, it be-



comes every man to remember that the author of our nature has placed the demands of this sense, and of the appetites connected with it, under our own direction and control, in order to exercise our virtue.

It merits your consideration, likewise, as philologists, that the term *taste*, in the English language, is used in three different significations. In the first, it implies that quality in a body which is capable of exciting the sensation of any particular flavor or relish in us.—In the second, it implies that power or sense, which is capable of perceiving the relish of a body when applied to the tongue. And, lastly, it implies the sensation itself excited in us. A similar remark, however, is applicable likewise to the terms by which the other senses and their objects are expressed; as sight, sound, odour, feeling, smell. But this variety of application being more frequent and familiar in the word *taste*, than in the terms appropriate to the other senses, seemed to require the observation in this place.

#### OF TOUCH.

The sense, of which I have proposed next in order to treat, is feeling, or touch. Of this sense the whole body is the organ. Its pains are indications of danger, which powerfully incite us to guard against the offending object. But the greatest portion of our sensations arising

from feeling are of that indifferent nature which shew the presence only of innoxious bodies. The principal part of its pleasures arise from soft and gentle motion across the surface of the skin, and from moderate warmth. These furnish in general its positive enjoyments, which are very much heightened by succeeding to painful feelings. The release from pain may itself be considered as a negative pleasure, which will always be enjoyed in proportion to the antecedent suffering.

The direct objects of touch are hardness, softness, figure, heat and cold. But almost all bodily sensations, except those of light, color, sound, odour, taste, may be referred to it. Among the direct objects of this sense, however, there is this remarkable difference,—that hardness, softness, and figure, are considered as real properties of body, as well as sensations in us; whereas, heat, and cold, as perceived by us, are not regarded as real properties of the bodies exciting these sensations. There can be no doubt that the qualities which cause these sensations, must exist in those bodies; but as they exist in them, they are very different from the sensations which they create in a percipient mind. Heat and cold are therefore called secondary qualities of bodies; the others are called primary. The sensations afforded to the touch by the latter are almost all indifferent; but

those produced by the former, are, as generally, either pleasing or painful.

I question the propriety of the distinction which has been made by philosophers between the primary and secondary qualities indicated by the touch, at least in the extent to which it has been carried. The sensations of hardness and softness as perceived by us, appear to me to be no less different from their causes, which consist in the immobility, or facile movement of the parts of bodies among themselves; than the sensations of heat and cold, from their causes, which consist in the glowing, or tendency to produce congelation of the bodies which excite them. The distinction, even if it were well founded, merits small consideration, as it involves no essential, or important consequence either to physics, or to morals.

But the highest pleasures, or the severest pains of feeling, do not arise from any of those corporeal properties which have been mentioned as the peculiar objects of the sense of touch. To impose a proper restraint upon the former often requires the highest exercise of virtuous self-command. And perhaps a no less exercise of virtuous firmness does it frequently require to overcome, in the discharge of duty, the dismaying terrors that arise from the latter. For the happiness of mankind, undoubtedly were formed the different sexes; yet, how

much of virtue consists in the prudent restraints which should regulate their intercourse? On the other hand, how much of vice consists in that cowardice which is not able in the discharge of our duty, to encounter or support the pain of dissevered nerves, or wounded limbs? And it deserves especially to be remembered by every virtuous disciple of philosophy, as well as by every christian, that the power of resisting pleasure with dignified temperance, or, on the other hand, of enduring pain with unshaken magnanimity, depends, in a great measure, on a vigorous habit of the will, under the direction of firm and established principles of virtue. Courage and contempt of pain, as well as the control of pleasure, are qualities which may be acquired by proper culture, even where they have been denied by nature. By cultivating a vigorous command of will, men, originally of infirm nerves, may not only gain the power over themselves, of meeting the greatest perils with calm and steady fortitude; but may in a degree blunt the exquisiteness of suffering. Another fact equally true, and perhaps more obvious, is, that high passions, and strong emotions, do often extinguish, in a great measure, the sense of the severest bodily pains; or the attention of the mind is so entirely absorbed by them, that the pain is scarcely perceived. The verification of this fact is often beheld in the elevated sentiments of military honor, in the ardent

glow of patriotic fervor, and above all in the strong religious affections which have so often animated, and supported the martyr.

#### OF HEARING.

I proceed in the next place, to offer a few remarks on the sense of hearing. The seat of this noble and exquisite sense is placed within the cavity of the ear. The sensations peculiar to this organ are excited by pulses or tremors of air propagated from the vibrations of tense and elastic bodies, collected by the various channels of the external ear, into its interior cavity. Thence their undulations are communicated by means of its fine machinery to the brain. Sounds are enumerated by many writers, among the secondary qualities of bodies. The sense of hearing furnishes to the mind a very large proportion of its most refined and exquisite enjoyments, and puts into its possession the means of its most extensive informations. By means of those natural sounds which the Author of our being has appointed as the immediate expression of our wants, emotions, and passions, we are often able through the sense of hearing, to discern the inward state, perceptions, desires, or apprehensions of the soul. But it gives to our use a much more ample range of information by means of those artificial sounds which have before been shewn to be the instituted signs,

by which all the objects of knowledge are expressed, and all the ideas framed by the mind may be communicated to others.

To the ear, likewise, belong the fields of melody, and harmony, or those charming modulations of sound which constitute the art of music, and are so well calculated to call into action many of the finest feelings and powers of the soul, and to exalt all its pleasures.

Sounds are distinguished by intensity, and by tone. The intensity of sound arises from the density of the pulses of air, and the force with which they strike upon the ear. Tones being the natural language of sentiment, the heart, by a happy composition of these, along with a due variation of their intensity, may be agitated by every emotion and passion in its turn, and the most varied moral and natural landscapes may be depicted to the fancy, or the heart, by the harmonious power of modulated sound. The emotions of gaiety, or pensiveness ; the passions of rage or of love ; the noblest, or the softest movements of the soul, may be inspired by it at pleasure. Through the sense of hearing it is that the ordinary intercourse of mankind is maintained ; that intercourse, so beneficial to their interests, so necessary to their happiness. To it the orator principally, and the musician entirely, addresses himself. And both these artists are known to possess a

most powerful influence over the state of public manners, and the revolutions of nations. Eloquence may be pronounced, to have held the destinies of the republics of Greece; and, for a long period, of that of Rome also. And several of the ancient legislators esteemed the power of music over the human mind to be so great as to require it to be made a subject of the regulation of the laws. Such is the importance and dignity of this sense, that it confessedly stands next to that of seeing, and holds an order far above the other senses.

#### OF SIGHT.

That sense which, for the variety and importance of its informations, and the compass of the enjoyments which it adds to existence, stands in the first place, is undoubtedly the sight. Its delicate, and beautiful organ is the eye; with the admirable structure of which you have already been made acquainted in the science of optics. As it is the principal inlet of knowledge, and forms the most commanding feature of the human countenance, so it usually expresses, more than any other feature, the dispositions, genius, emotions, and the whole character and energy of the soul. Hence it is that the orator often finds his access to the heart with the greatest success through the eye.

For the sources of its information it takes in the whole external structure of nature, and the whole compass of the visible signs of thought. Of those arbitrary signs, particularly, which compose the written language of nations, it gives the most extensive command. And, in consequence of the happy invention of letters, the arts have been improved, science has been cultivated, knowledge has been accumulated, preserved, imparted, and increased by communication, more successfully than by all other means. To them civilized nations are chiefly indebted for their superiority over the savage, and half brutal tribes of men; and human nature itself for its nearest approaches to superior orders of being.

It is necessary, in the next place, to enquire what are the proper objects of this sense, and what are the informations it affords?—The primary and original perceptions of sight are of superficial extension, and figure, of apparent magnitude, of light, shade, and color. These ideas, when presented to the mind naked, and single, abstracted from their combinations, and the charming influence of the imagination, seem to offer to the intellectual faculties only very dry and meagre objects of contemplation. But when nature is suffered to operate freely, and we are not endeavoring merely to analyze the skeletons of our ideas, this sense, aided by the mysterious powers of the imagination, clothes its objects



with certain indescribable forms, and spreads over them a glow of beauty which are but feebly expressed, or rather, are not expressed at all, by the terms figure, extension, light, shade, or color.

It is of some importance, likewise, to consider the manner in which the notices of external things are conveyed to the mind through the eye. When this organ is in a sound state, and any visible object is placed in a proper position to it, it is known that the light reflected from its surface into the pupil, is so converged, by the refractive powers of its various humours, on the fine expansion of the optic nerve at its bottom, as to form there a perfect image of that object. The machinery of the eye thus far we can trace. And it is farther evident that the eye discerns its object only through the medium of this image ; because, if the light is intercepted so that no image can be formed, or if the optic nerve is disordered so as to disturb the regularity of the image, the object cannot be discerned, or is distorted with every distortion of this visual picture. But when we would proceed farther, and explain how a picture stained upon the retina produces a perfect perception of an object without, in attempting to develope this, the fine and secret operation of nature eludes our penetration. Or, if we say, with the philosophers already mentioned, that every vibration of a nerve is accompanied with its peculiar

sensation, so that each ray of light which enters into the spectral image formed at the bottom of the eye, exciting, according to its color, inclination, and impulse, a correspondent vibration, and consequently its correspondent sensation, terminating, like all sensitive action, on its type without, although it should seem to advance us one step in our progression towards solving this mystery, must still leave us remote from any clear and distinct apprehension how nervous motion is productive of sensation, or how any vibrations in the optic nerve are connected with the external objects of our perception. Our sensation does not lead us directly to the consideration, or perception of the vibration in the optic nerve by which it is excited, but to that of the object from which the image is reflected to the eye.

All philosophers have not concurred in the doctrine of vibrations; though all agree that vision is effected by means of images, or pictures of external objects at the bottom of the eye. Some have supposed that the mind contemplates only those images, and thence infers, by a regular process of reasoning, the existence of the objects which they represent. The error of this opinion must be evident to every person who reflects, that very few of mankind are even acquainted with the existence of these ocular images. And those who are, have this further proof of the falsehood of the conclusion, that the picture

and distances of bodies, we learn to know originally only through the sense of touch; but we may by experience acquire a perception of them likewise by the eye. Figure is determined from the relations of light and shade. Magnitude from distance previously known, compared with the angle presented by the object at the eye. And distance from real compared with apparent magnitude. The laws by which these calculations are made are properly the objects of natural, and mathematical science.

## LECTURE IX.

## CONTENTS.

*Of internal sensation—divided into three classes; those sensations which relate to the acts and sentiments of our own minds; those which relate to the fine arts; and those which relate to morals.—The second of these only pursued in the present lecture. Their relation to morals. Divided also into various classes;—that of sublimity—of beauty—of harmony—of the imitative pleasure—of the ridiculous.—Of the sublime—its nature—its sources—its end.—Of beauty—of the effect of associations—the cause of the different tastes of beauty in different nations.—Of the ingredients of beauty, color, figure, motion.—Of the subordinate ideas in the beauty of figure, order, proportion, fitness. The moral end of this taste.—Of motion. The moral relations of all these ideas.*

HAVING considered the outward senses as the organs through which we receive all our ideas of external objects, it remains, next in order, to treat of internal sensation, or that provision in the constitution of our nature, by which we become acquainted with the powers and acts of our own minds. The primary, and

original perception of any quality, which cannot be understood except by the impression which it makes upon us, or the feeling it excites, and which, if that impression be not previously made, or that feeling excited, can never be rendered intelligible by any power of language, is properly called a *sensation*. And the faculty, by which that quality is perceived, and which is susceptible of that feeling, is properly denominated a *sense*. If this definition be just, we have the same reason to ascribe our knowledge of the properties, and operations of the mind, as of body, to a principle of *sensation*. The nature of color, or of sound, of corporeal pleasure or pain, we understand only by actual impressions made on the external senses of sight, of hearing, and of touch. In like manner, it is only in the actual exercise of *thought*, and in the impression it makes upon the mind, that we come to understand what *thought* is. By the same process we arrive at the knowledge of what is meant by the expressions, *I love, I hate, I doubt, I am convinced, I will, I believe, I remember*, and a thousand other operations of the soul, which are clearly perceived only by its reflex powers turning its attention inward on its own acts. Hence likewise, those general terms love, hatred, reason, faith, volition, right, wrong, and others of the same class found in all languages, and derived from these previous operations, are rendered intelligible. The ideas of internal,

or mental sensation, have this analogy with those derived from external sense, that the notices they afford are simple. There are no others more simple and obvious by which to explain them. We can render no account of their origin but that such is the constitution of our nature, that we should be capable of such acts of the mind, and that exerting them, we should be conscious of them, in which consciousness all our knowledge of them consists.

The external senses are obviously distinct from one another in the structure of their several organs, and in the nature of the ideas which they impart to the mind. Internal sensation, likewise, furnishes it with various *classes* of ideas which are not less various and diversified in their nature than the external. The simple essence of the soul, however, seems not to be divided, nor divisible into different organs of sensation. But, as the whole body is the organ of external feeling, so the whole soul being occupied in each spiritual, or mental perception, the various classes of these ideas may, perhaps, be regarded as different *modes of internal feeling*. And each mode of feeling, embracing a separate class of ideas, may be considered, if you please, as a separate sense. As this classification, however, has never yet been made on account of the subtlety, and the indefinite limits of the ideas which compose the respective divisions, I shall

not attempt it in this place. Yet, we familiarly speak of a sense of order, a sense of propriety, a sense of beauty, of right, and wrong, and many others, which have been selected on account of their importance, and formed into distinct classes. Of a few only of these I shall take notice, for the sake of illustration, arranging them under three more general divisions :

1. Those which relate to the acts and sentiments of our own minds.
2. Those which relate to the fine arts.
3. And, lastly, those which relate to morals.

The first division, which consists of those sensations or perceptions which make us acquainted with the acts and sentiments of our own minds, is referable entirely to the head of consciousness or reflection. I am conscious, for example, of the general fact of my existing. The great Des Cartes thought that he ought not to assume that proposition on the ground of sensation without first demonstrating its truth, for which purpose he framed this syllogism;—*I think, therefore, I exist*. He did not sufficiently advert to this fact, that *thought* is not more obvious than *existence*; our existing is as evident and certain a truth as our thinking; both resting on our *consciousness*, or that internal sensation, which affords an evidence which, like that of the external

senses, is always to be held as ultimate. We can never go beyond it to obtain a clearer principle on which to found its conclusions.—It is on the same ground I perceive that my soul is different from the body with which it is connected: that the *properties*, and therefore the *essence* of the one, and of the other, are wholly distinct. I am conscious, in like manner, of liberty of choice, and of entire power over my own actions, and determinations. By the same means I understand the nature and operations of mind, as, by the external senses, I understand those of body, and comprehend the import of the terms employed to designate them.

Under the third division are embraced all those powers and perceptions which go to make up the moral faculty, or are immediately connected with practical morality. Such are the sense of *right* and *wrong*, of *justice*, *truth*, and others of this class, which are reserved, however, for a more particular consideration when I come to treat directly of the moral faculty, and those ideas which enter into the theory of morals. .

The second division, which will compose the remaining part of this lecture, comprehends all those sensations which are connected peculiarly with the fine arts. To trace the various principles and emotions, which enter into a full consideration of that vast and elegant depart-



ment of human science, belongs to the province of taste and criticism. Yet, with the philosophy of morals they are not unconnected, inasmuch as they are component principles of human nature which it is an important object of philosophy to examine; and they are acknowledged to possess a direct and immediate influence upon manners, and the moral tendencies of the heart.

From the various field of ideas belonging to the fine arts, I shall take our examples out of the classes of sublimity, of beauty, of harmony, of those that spring from the imitative tendency in man, or from his perception of the ridiculous, especially in human character.

All the ideas peculiarly connected with the fine arts are derived originally from objects of external sense; but these objects have, through the influence of the imagination, other finer perceptions connected with them, besides those which are imparted by mere animal sensation. Whence they have been called, by various writers, *secondary sensations*. The inferior animals perceive the color, and bulk of objects; they are sensible of sounds loud, or low; but none, except beings endued with intelligence, taste, and moral feeling, discern, in visible objects, those qualities which are denominated beauty, order, symmetry, proportion; nor in sounds do they seem to be sensible of those agreeable successions or combina-

tions of notes and tones which we call melody or harmony. They evidently possess the external senses in as great perfection as mankind; but appear to be utterly void of the powers of internal sensation. In the primary impressions of sense they exhibit no deficiency; but give not any evidence that they have the least apprehension of those finer, secondary perceptions which, in human nature, lay a foundation for the arts.

Of these the first that I have mentioned is *sublimity*. When we contemplate objects uncommonly lofty, or great, they seem to expand the soul, and to raise its conceptions and its feelings beyond their usual elevation. Whence the emotion which they excite has been called *the sublime*. The same character has been equally ascribed to other objects, whether distinguished by uncommon magnitude and loftiness, or not, and whether they are within the sphere of the physical or moral operations of nature, if they create a similar expansion of soul, or awaken congenial feelings of admiration, or of awe. Such is the grandeur of the agitated ocean,—the rushing of an impetuous torrent,—the sound of thunder, or the stroke of lightning. To the sublime belong also the emotions excited by the characters and actions of illustrious men, which tend to rouse the soul to high and noble achievement, or to call forth its profound respect and veneration. Every ingenuous mind will be

disposed to feel with the poet, and the orator, that ennobling ardor with which he kindles at the great displays of genius, of public virtue, of undismayed fortitude, or heroic enterprize ;—Regulus returning to Carthage, against the entreaties of his family, and of Rome,—Cato struggling amidst the ruins of his country,—or Demosthenes agitating by his eloquence, the effeminate and divided people of Athens, and impelling them with united effort into the war against the arms of Macedon.

The sublime partakes of different characters and modifications, according to the objects from which it is derived, or the emotions which it raises in the mind. The heavens, for example, awaken conceptions of the most grand and serious kind ; but these are diversified by circumstances, being more splendid and animated when enlightened by the sun ; more tranquil and solemn when overspread by the still majesty of night, and its innumerable but mild luminaries. Nature in other aspects, as in her tempests, her earthquakes, and volcanoes, presents to us only an awful grandeur.

There is a sublime that belongs to each of the fine arts, as various as the spirit of the muse which presides over the art. But, wherever the character exists, it is distinguished by this, that it tends to fill the mind with

great conceptions, and to inspire it with elevated and noble emotions.

Critics have endeavored to discover some single principle, which is the basis of the sublime, and forms its characteristic distinction from every other class of objects. A distinguished author has fixed upon the power of producing terror; as if it were essential to the sublimity of objects, and to that stile in which they ought to be presented to the mind, to inspire an awe always mixed with a degree of fear. Others have imagined that vastness, or amplitude of dimension, is the true foundation of the sublime emotion.—Although nature delights in the simplicity of the principles, from which her various effects are produced, yet are they often too fine to be discerned by the human mind, and distinctly discriminated from every adventitious mixture. And, in the present case, if there be any one principle pervading all sublime objects which imparts to them their distinctive character, it has never yet been unquestionably pointed out. The sublime emotion may be raised by very various objects addressing themselves to various powers of human nature. It is, therefore, better characterized by its effects than by its principle. Whatever expands and elevates the soul, or fills it with astonishment and admiration, may be made a source of the sublime; whether it be accompanied with still and silent

awe, or be productive of great excitement, and perturbation of mind. One property appears to be essential to all sublime objects, that they raise in the mind, irresistably, conceptions of vast force and power either in the immediate agent, or in the Author of nature on whom all things depend. And the more intimately their existence and operations are associated with the idea of his power, and the more forcibly they present it to the imagination, the more sublime is the emotion created by them. The most sublime of all objects, then, is the Deity himself. His infinite power, intelligence, justice, and beneficence, the immensity of his presence, the eternity of his existence, are calculated to fill the mind with the grandest views, and the noblest affections.

The end for which the Creator has implanted in man this high relish for the sublime in the works both of nature and of art apparently is, to awaken a spirit of devotion to their Author, and to elevate the soul above the degrading passions and pursuits of vice. When the mind is occupied with the sublime contemplations of nature, it becomes more conscious of the dignity of its being, and more inclined to cultivate the pure and noble affections of virtue. And is not reason entitled to conclude that this strong and lively relish for enjoyments so noble, and so nearly allied to virtue, has not been im-

planted in the human breast, but in reference to a future and superior state of existence?

The next of those general classes of internal sensation which I have pointed out is that of *beauty*. This term, in common language, is of very general, and frequently of very indefinite application to almost every thing in nature, in art, or in human character and conduct, that affords pleasure in the contemplation. Those manners are esteemed amiable which indicate a peculiar suavity of disposition, expressed with gracefulness and ease. Even the most abstracted subjects of science are said to be exhibited with beauty, when it is done with clearness, precision, and a certain neatness and simplicity of stile.

● But beauty, considered as a quality of external objects, to which it is primarily applicable, respects such chiefly as are taken in by the eye. Certain colors, forms of bodies, and kinds of motion, are fitted by the constitution of our nature, to affect the sense of vision with pleasure, and are, therefore, esteemed beautiful. The pleasure they afford is augmented by being associated with other qualities that are agreeable, and being indications of them. So that complexion of the human countenance which the habit of our nation has rendered pleasing, and those tints of it, especially, which are associated with youth and health, contribute chiefly, in our opinion, to its beauty. The foundation of beauty lies in the power

of objects to excite pleasurable emotions in us. This power resides partly in the nature of the things, and their adaptation to the constitution of the several senses; and arises partly from custom and habit, which has this peculiar influence, to render pleasing things originally indifferent, or even disgusting; or by the associations continually presented to the mind, to increase, correct, or modify, with infinite diversity, our natural pleasures. Hence the preference that is given by most men to the scenes and usages of their own country. They are connected in their minds with every thing that has been most delightful in existence. In this reflection we probably discern the true reason of that diversity which exists in different ages, and nations, in the taste of personal beauty, of ornament, of rural and agricultural scenery, and, generally, whatever in the arts, and particularly in the manner of writing, in poetry and eloquence, is esteemed most perfect in its execution.

Prevalent ideas diffused among a people by the influence of education, or even by the temporary caprices of fashion, may be attended with a similar effect. The same reflection may assist to settle those controversies concerning the standard of taste which have long existed among critics. Nature certainly indicates those general principles that go to constitute a standard of beauty in the arts; but it is variously modified by the habits and

customs of different countries, and different periods of society, and by the obvious state of the visible, and the moral world, continually presented to the senses, and imagination of men from their earliest years.—Hence the taste for grandeur and simplicity in writing, in architecture, statuary, and all the arts which grew up in the hardy and mountainous region of Greece;—that loose, flowing and magnificent stile which was cherished amidst the voluptuous air, and luxurious scenes of the east; the rude and melancholy sublimity of Ossian and his northern bards.

In the ingredients of visible beauty are reckoned color, figure, and movement: and, in the beauty of figure, its subordinate ideas are order, proportion, and utility.—All the most beautiful colors are those which are vivid and gay, or are delicate and soft. The primary colors of light are all of the former class. The latter are formed by certain skilful mixtures of the original rays that agreeably mitigate their glare. Those colors which relieve the tender organ of the eye by the coolness of their light, if I may speak so, as the deep blue of the sky, or the soft green of the field, are always peculiarly pleasing. But those rude, unskilful mixtures which leave to the composition no definite character, but appear rather like soiled or faded colors, are never agreeable. In this, as in so many other subjects, we perceive the



powerful influence of associations. The beauty and charm of color is greatly augmented in animal and vegetable bodies by exhibiting indications of the healthful and flourishing state of the animal, or plant; and, in drapery, by conjoining it with the taste, or rank of the wearer. The beautiful tints of the morning, or evening sky, are rendered doubly beautiful by the freshness of the air, and the ideas accompanying the waking energies of creation at the opening of the day; or the stillness and tendency to repose that seems to be settling on all things at the shutting in of evening.

Beauty is perceived in the figure, not less than in the color of bodies. There are some forms, adapted, by the very constitution of our nature, to affect us with pleasing sensations. These are all regular in their structure, and commonly afford striking indications of intelligence and design in their author, or suggest their peculiar aptitude to some useful end. Of many of the ingredients, however, in the beauty of form we can assign no other reason of the pleasure they yield, than that such is the order and will of our Creator in the structure of nature. This is, perhaps, the sole ground of our preference of a curved outline, to one that is straight. Yet this natural pleasure, is, in many instances, modified by other considerations of convenience, and fitness; or even by the prepossessions of eustom, or caprice. In the shaft of a

pillar we prefer a straight line to a curve; in the leg of a horse we should be displeased with the swell which is so graceful in that of a man. Our ideas of fitness and propriety will vary the forms of beauty that we look for in the structure and decorations of a temple, from those which we would expect in a pleasure house in a garden. Caprice alone will sometimes regulate them, as has been seen in the fantastic figures which fashion has, at different periods, prescribed to shrubbery and trees designed for the ornament of pleasure grounds.

The subordinate ideas in the beauty of form are order, proportion, and utility or fitness.—On these several principles I shall make only a few brief remarks.

Order is that arrangement of parts which exhibits them in their most natural relations,—which aids the transition of the eye from one to another,—and which sets off to the greatest advantage, and promotes the effect of the whole upon the mind.

Proportion respects the relative magnitude of parts, which the eye requires to be in a certain ratio to one another in order to be pleased, according to the end for which any work of art is designed.

Utility always has reference to some purpose to be fulfilled. And it was the opinion of Socrates, we are in-

formed, that the principal idea in the beauty of any work of nature or of art, is its perfect adaptation to the purpose for which it was formed. On this principle we judge of the beauty of gates, of doors, of gardens, porticoes, and the various architectural structures designed for sacred, or for secular uses. Certain it is that nature has so constituted us, that we derive pleasure from various colors, forms, and movements both of animate and inanimate objects, although they have no necessary relation to any particular end; but if there be an important end that is effected by them, we soon learn to modify our ideas of their beauty, by their peculiar fitness or otherwise to the purpose of their being. It would be absurd to see the gay drapery of a drawing room introduced to decorate a senate chamber, or a hall of justice, or twisted columns formed to support a massy edifice; and that absurdity would destroy all their beauty. In animals themselves, though we admire the beautiful turns and flexures of their bodies, and their limbs, when they are in that perfection for which nature intended them, yet the principal part of their beauty consists in their aptness for their several destinations.

One, and perhaps the chief reason of the pleasure imparted by order, proportion, utility, and fitness, arises from the indications which they contain of intelligence, design, and wisdom. Mind is the noblest essence in the

universe. With all that commands our veneration, or awakes in the soul the emotion of pleasure, we always perceive mind connected, and as it were embodied. Wherever the dispositions, and energies of the soul appear to be transfused upon matter, it derives from them its principal power of charming the sense. Without this expression of soul even "the human face divine" would lose all its dignity and grace. The finest tints of coloring, and symmetry of features in the female countenance, owe their principal charms to the mysterious accompaniment of intelligence, modesty, delicacy, and virtuous sentiment, with which they are blended. The greatest profligate is obliged, for his own pleasure, to awaken some image of virtuous feeling in the unhappy wretch whom he has already rifled of the true charm of virtue. That organization, therefore,—those proportions,—that symmetry of parts,—and that expression resulting from the whole, which suggest to us intelligence, wisdom, goodness, or most effectually blend these ideas with any of the operations of nature, or of art, will ever be esteemed beautiful, and derive their chief beauty from that very circumstance.

Here we discover a moral end in this interior sense and taste of beauty. It begets a high admiration of the wisdom, and goodness of the Deity; and, in the study both of philosophy, and the arts;—in the contemplation of

the objects of beauty, not less than in exploring the most abstracted relations of science, serves equally, under proper cultivation, to promote the love of knowledge, and the love of virtue. It will be especially favorable to the growth of all the amiable and benevolent dispositions of the heart.

Under that general class of internal, or secondary sensations, denominated the beautiful, is comprehended, in the last place, according to the plan I have laid down, that of easy and graceful motion. As the curve, when deflected gently from a straight direction, is the most beautiful of lines, so a waving motion that is gentle and regular, exhibits almost all animals, in their most interesting attitudes. And, among inanimate objects, streams that meander negligently through the meads, are more pleasing to the eye, than the formality of straight canals, except where some ideas of utility interpose to modify the first impulse of natural feeling; as in canals cut for the convenience of travelling, or transportation. This graceful wave increases the pleasure of contemplating a bird floating on the bosom of the air; an elegant woman circling in the mazes of a dance, or that soothing image of still life, the gentle ascent of smoke in the morning, or the evening, from a cottage embosomed in trees.

If we ask whence it is that such motions impart the pleasure we perceive? We may answer, as in the former examples, that it results from the constitution of our nature. It is also, like them, increased by agreeable associations. And, as our principal pleasures arise from moral and intellectual associations, the supposition may not, perhaps, be deemed too fanciful, that part of the beauty of the gentle curve, or the graceful and waving motion, may arise from the analogy which it is imagined to bear, and which seems to be acknowledged in the most familiar figures of speech, to that softness and flexibility of disposition which accompanies the most amiable and benevolent manners.

These remarks on the subject of beauty I shall conclude with that common observation, that a fine human countenance embraces the greatest variety of exquisite beauties any where to be found within the same compass. Besides the fine tints of the complexion, the noble form, and proportions of the features, that expression of soul, of intelligence, of goodness, of delicacy, of sentiment, of honorable and virtuous feeling, which they exhibit every instant in an infinite variety of dignified and graceful movements, render it the most interesting object in nature. As the studies and pursuits of men have an influence on that character of soul which is transfused on the countenance by the habits of life, it is not unim-

portant to observe that the national physiognomy of any people may be greatly improved by the cultivation of the arts, and by the refinement of the manners of society. Individuals likewise, have it much in their power to improve the noble and interesting aspect of the countenance, and the graces of the person, by the liberal culture of the talents of the mind, and virtues of the heart. Nature, indeed, has given the outline, but a great deal depends on cultivation to fill it up with the traits of intelligence, of benevolence, or of nobleness in the expression.

## LECTURE X.

## CONTENTS.

## FURTHER ILLUSTRATIONS OF INTERNAL SENSATION.,

*1st. Of harmony.—2d. Of imitation; of the imitative arts, painting, sculpture, and poetry. A solution of this problem, why objects or scenes which are painful to sense are pleasing in representation?—3d. Of ridicule.—Of the moral influence of these several principles of sensation.*

THE next of the internal sensations of which I proposed to treat is that of *harmony*.

By the ear we perceive sounds; but it is by an internal sense, or perception, of which, as far as we can judge, no other animal partakes, that we discern that character of them which is denominated *harmony*. Under this term is embraced, at present, not only harmony properly so called, which consists in the agreeable combination of sounds, but melody, which is much more simple, consisting in an agreeable succession of sounds. It belongs to the science of music to explain the laws of melody and harmony. I shall here make only two or three general observations upon that sense, or faculty of our nature which judges of them.



By it we perceive that some sounds in themselves, and independent of every accompaniment, are agreeable, others are harsh;—that certain combinations of sounds form pleasing concords; others are dissonant, and grating to the ear. The succession of agreeable sounds forms melody; and agreeable concords are the constituents of harmony. All men are not equally susceptible of the pleasures arising from the one, or the other. But, melody affording much the most simple and natural enjoyment, there are few who are not capable of relishing it in a high degree. But to enjoy the pleasures of harmony requires a certain delicacy of ear; and the more complicated strains of it can seldom be perfectly relished till the sense has been cultivated by experience, and acquired a facility in discriminating the diversity of sounds, and attending to the union of their concords at the same instant. Some men there are, however, among whom the celebrated Dean Swift furnishes one of the most striking examples, who seem to be totally destitute of this fine power of human nature.

There are tones, within the province of harmony, which peculiarly accord with the various states and feelings of the mind, or the different passions and emotions we may desire to excite in it. Pensiveness, or gaiety, courage or love, and especially all the soft and tender emotions of the heart may be awakened, and the violent

soothed by the power of music. And the peculiar accordance of its tones with the gentle, or the generous feelings of the soul, adds greatly to the charm it is felt to possess. Being chiefly favorable to those amiable or noble emotions which tend to soften the manners and humanize the temper of mankind, we perceive in this effect of the art the true reason why the Spartan magistrates, who encouraged only the sterner virtues, obliged Timotheus to simplify his lyre. And the edict of the magistrates of Sparta is a proof of the moral influence of music. As the pleasures of harmony are then most exquisite when it is in unison with the tone and temper of the soul, this furnishes, perhaps, the principal reason why it derives so great additional power from its union with poetry. Poetry combining all the powers requisite for awaking the most sublime, or the most tender sentiments of the heart, thereby predisposes it for the enjoyment of the highest pleasures of a correspondent harmony. The most exquisite tones of harmony, when separated from the noble accompaniment of poetry, although beautiful, are comparatively feeble in their effect. But when the muse adds her numbers, imagery, and inspiration, at once touching the heart, and giving wings to the imagination, it is then that harmony exerts her finest influence upon the soul.

Notes and tones alone are not sufficiently definite in their meaning, till they are rendered determinate by the ode, which consequently augments their impression on the heart. On none of the senses, external or internal, is the influence of association more obvious, or powerful than on that of harmony. They are the pleasing associations collected in the ode which give the highest additional charm to the music in which they are conveyed. This is the enchantment that renders the music of one's native country more delightful than that of all others; especially after one has been long absent from it, recalling "the memory of past joys, pleasing and mournful to the soul." The most simple music being commonly connected with the most pure and simple national manners, is ever found to take the deepest hold upon the heart. Hence the Swiss soldier, almost exiled in a foreign service, is often overwhelmed by his transports in listening to one of those simple airs which he has often heard in his youth re-echoed along the crags and vallies of the Alps.

When we reflect how powerfully the sense of harmony may be employed to awaken the sublime raptures of devotion,—to rouse the noble heroism of the patriot soldier,—to soothe the multiplied sorrows of life,—to compose the spirit of resigned piety,—to harmonize the passions,—and even to promote the innocent joys, and

recreate the cheerful scenes of social life, we will be far from esteeming it an unimportant or inferior principle in our moral constitution.

The imitative faculty, or, tendency to imitation, and sense of pleasure in seeing it well executed, is one of the most powerful principles in human nature. It belongs to the internal, and reflex, or secondary powers of sensation which are peculiar to man. No other animal seems to possess it. For those uniform actions in which all the inferior animals of the same species are found to agree in every age, are, perhaps, to be ascribed rather to *instinct*, a principle afterwards to be explained, than to a faculty, or taste for imitation. In man it holds a most important rank among the moral principles of his being. In the first periods of our existence the human character is chiefly formed by it; and, in the subsequent stages of life, till the fibre of age becomes rigid and unelastic, and its habits are, by time, unchangeably fixed, individual, and even national manners are liable to undergo great amelioration, or deterioration, by a free and unrestrained intercourse with mankind.

In the constitution of human nature this principle may be regarded in its original intention, as most wise and beneficent. It gives to youth, in the formation of its manners, and its moral habits, the advantage of age and

experience, at that period when ignorance, and uncorrected passion are most liable to mislead it from its true interests and the proper end of life. It is, indeed, liable to pernicious abuse, when young men, yielding to the impulses of their irregular appetites, court only the society of vicious companions who encourage and assist their indulgence; but, in the general state and order of the world, its influence is favorable to virtue; and gives to the useful power of education, under the direction of a wise domestic, or public discipline, its firmest hold upon the human heart.

The imitative principle has not only a direct and immediate influence upon morals, but one which, though powerful, is more remote, by its connexion with the fine arts. On it are founded entirely the arts of statuary and painting; and, in a great measure, those also of music and poetry: whence they have received the denomination of the *imitative arts*. The two former exhibit visible, and almost perfect representations, in colors, and in stone, of the natural objects which they copy. And when they present to us objects or scenes drawn only from fancy, still nature must be their type. It is only the resemblance of nature which they bear that charms. It is requisite that they be such as we can easily conceive to subsist, and insinuate their probability to the

imagination, by presenting strongly the general features of nature.

Both these arts may reach even the interior of the soul by giving to the features, the attitudes and gestures of their characters, those lively and expressive traits which never fail to develope, to the nice observer and copier of human nature, the emotions and sentiments of the mind.

Music, likewise, is susceptible of direct imitation, where it is intended only to exhibit the plaintive, or the joyous tones of pleasure or distress, or simply to repeat the echo of other sounds. This, however, would afford a very limited field to the art. But it is capable of a secondary kind of imitation which opens to its powers one of much greater extent, and variety. By its movement, and its tones it has the power of awakening in the soul emotions pensive or gay, lugubrious or sprightly, harsh or soft, tender or serene, analogous to those created by the various scenes of nature, or exhibited in the various dramatic representations of human character. Under the influence of these musical emotions the imagination gives the most vivid coloring to the natural, or moral landscapes intended to be called up by the musician; and all the analogous pictures of the poet are presented with additional liveliness and beauty.

Poetry may be regarded as the most various and extensive of the imitative arts. Of visible objects, within certain dimensions, the pencil can certainly present the most striking images. But beyond those dimensions that the canvass can exhibit with effect, or in those deep, interior, and complicated emotions which cannot be painted in one instant, on the countenance, and caught at a single glance of the eye, the poet has infinitely the advantage of the painter. Poetry forms its pictures by language; and it has been made a question among critics whether strictly speaking, they ought to be called imitations of nature, which are always supposed to address the senses, and not rather descriptions, which represent their objects to the imagination?—The question is frivolous, as long as these representations call up their images to the mind in a manner not less vivid and picturesque, than those which are most strictly imitative. Poetical painting is not confined to the exhibition of objects, or of scenes which are known to have had an actual existence; but enjoys the liberty of creating the pictures of others which may, according to the general structure of nature, be supposed with probability to exist. But whether its representations be of real objects, or of imaginary scenes, still nature is required to be the basis of them; and a resemblance to her works constitutes the perfection of poetry,

That I may not enter too far into discussions which properly belong to the art of criticism, I will only further remark, along with all writers upon this subject, that good imitation imparts a lively pleasure to the mind, independently of the beauty or agreeableness of the objects which form the ground of its representations. Objects, or scenes which it would be painful to witness, become pleasing under the shelter of a good imitation. This is observable especially in epic, and dramatic representations, and those odes which most tenderly awaken the sympathies of the heart with human sufferings. It is a pleasure derived immediately from the imitative principle in man; and contributes, in no slight degree, to the improvement both of his mental faculties and his moral affections. It prompts to the assiduous study of nature; and, by awaking many of the finest feelings of the heart, and calling forth the most elegant and noble efforts of imagination, it tends greatly to the cultivation of the best powers of the soul, and to prepare it as a mellowed soil, for the implantation of all the mild and benevolent virtues. As the study of abstracted science contributes to strengthen the intellectual faculties, the cultivation of the imitative arts has not less influence in cherishing the gentle dispositions of the heart.

It has often been proposed as a moral problem to the philosopher; why, though shocked with the actual sight



of human misery, we are always delighted with the exhibition of it in the imitative arts; and the more truly it is represented, the pleasure is proportionably increased? We gaze with admiration on the convulsions of the *Laocoon*, or the agonies of the dying *Gladiator*;—we read with exquisite delight the description of the final sack of *Troy* as it is presented to us by *Virgil*. One of the principal sources of this pleasure arises from the consideration of the powers of genius displayed by the sculptor, and the poet;—his quick and just perception of the true expression of nature;—that masterly selection and delineation of circumstances which are calculated most effectually to touch the sympathies of the heart.—Another is to be found in the constitution of human nature itself. We are so framed by the benignity of the Creator, in order to connect mankind by the most gentle but powerful ties, as strongly to pity the distresses of our fellow men, and to approve ourselves for this generous emotion. The view of actual misery generally affects our sensibility so strongly as to be painful. But the dramatic representation is accompanied with the secret persuasion that the calamities presented to the imagination are not real; or, if real, all that is shocking to sense being removed from sight, there remains only that soft and tender emotion which yields a peculiar pleasure, always accompanied with a consciousness that it is a

feeling most becoming human nature. The circumstances mingled in the narration by the poet's art, the beauty of the language, and the delicacy with which he touches every susceptibility of the heart, all contribute to soothe the pain in representation, or description, which the actual presence of objects in distress would occasion.

On the subject of the imitation of nature, I conclude with this observation, that seldom does the poet content himself with the portrait of nature naked and unadorned. Something is generally added to increase her charms, and augment the interest which we take in the description. Almost all her works she throws out in somewhat of an unfinished state, that the ingenuity of man may be employed in giving them perfection, and applying them to the most useful purposes. The stone that is drawn from the quarry must be hewn by the art of the builder; and the gardener's taste must be employed in laying out, and dressing the richest soil. The genius of the artist almost always makes some ornamental additions to the simplicity of nature. The same liberty is allowed to the imitations of the poet. But it ought to be carefully borne in mind, that they should never go beyond the bounds of probability: that is, what nature may easily be supposed to be, or what, on some favored spots, or under the cultivation of man, she may actually be found to be. The imitations of genius, shew us rather what she might be,

than what she is. Thus the imitative principle enlarges the field of our intellectual pleasures, and increases the delight which nature in her simplest and unadorned state is calculated to afford.

The cultivation of the imitative arts, therefore, when not carried to an effeminate excess, to which, in the declining periods of society, they are liable, is favorable to the moral dispositions of the heart. The temper of man is softened by them, and he becomes more prone to the exercise of its gentle affections.

The last of those internal principles of sensation, connected immediately with the fine arts, or with morals, of which I proposed to treat, in order to illustrate this part of our intellectual nature, is the *sense* of the ridiculous. —It is, like the other finer powers of perception, so peculiar to man, that we discover no traces of it in the inferior animals; unless some of the mischievous actions, and ludicrous appearances of the monkey tribe may be resolved into this source. The ideas yielded by this sense, equally with those furnished by every other principle of either external or internal sensation, are *simple* and *ultimate*, so that they can be explained, or understood only by being felt, or excited in the mind by the appearance of some ridiculous object. The idea of the ridiculous cannot be made the subject of a strictly logical

definition more than the ideas of color, or of sound. But it can be immediately understood by presenting an appropriate object to the sense. The boastful cowardice and detected galantry of sir John Falstaff submitting through fear to be crammed into a buckbasket with foul linen, by a couple of jolly hussies with whom he had been trifling, and in this ~~state~~ drenched in the mud and water of the Thames, gives us an infinitely better notion of the ridiculous than could be imparted by any definition.—Several eminent writers have endeavored to explain that perception which we call the ridiculous, by defining the objects which excite it. Aristotle says, “it is some *fault*, or *turpitude* that is not attended with pain, and that is not destructive.”—But many slight faults or turpitudes there certainly are, which come under this description, that neither awaken ridicule, nor provoke laughter. If we ask, then, for a more precise designation of those faults, we can only be told that they are ridiculous faults. That is, we must appeal to the sense, or perception of ridicule itself in the first place, in order to define those objects, which are introduced to explain it.

Equally unhappy in his illustration is Mr Hutcheson, who says, “it is the contrast of dignity and meanness appearing in the same object which occasions laughter, or excites the emotion of ridicule.” The same observation may be applied to this definition as to that of Aristotle;

that it wants precision. It is not every contrast of dignity and meanness appearing in the same object which produces pleasantry and mirth. Nero, turned piper and charioteer, raises only indignation. We must reply, then, as in the former case, that ridiculous contrasts alone excite that sensation in us. Still we appeal to the *sense* to enable us to understand its objects.

Although it is not every contrast of dignity and meanness that is ridiculous, yet, in most of those objects which are so, there is a certain union of incongruous ideas which excite a gay and quick vibration of mind between them. That peculiar species of incongruity, however, is discerned only by this internal sense. Some men, who are little inclined to pleasantry, perceive it very feebly in any subject; others, on the contrary, have this perception so quick and strong that there is hardly an object in nature, in which they cannot discern, or make some ridiculous points to provoke laughter.

The sudden and rapid discernment of these contrasts, and their prompt and unexpected re-union in one picture, constitutes what is called wit. If they are too palpable and obvious, and the mind of the reader or hearer anticipates the union of the incongruous ideas, the pleasantry is in a great measure lost. The more remote the whole is from common observation, if it be not forced, but only

requires a nice and quick perception to discern them, the more sprightly is the vibration of the mind, between the contrary ideas, and the greater, generally, is the pleasure and surprize arising from their junction.

In comparing the exertions of human genius, it is a remark that has been often made, that the greatest powers of wit, and reason are seldom combined. The faculties of the mind are so limited, that, by directing its energies principally in one channel, they are proportionably weakened in their action in every other. If, therefore, the talents of wit, or the propensities of ridicule, which are employed chiefly in observing the contrasts, and assembling the incongruities of things, be habitually cherished and indulged, the reasoning faculty, which is occupied chiefly in examining their resemblances and agreements, in order to derive from them the general conclusions of science, is in the same degree weakened by diverting its attention to entirely opposite ideas. The talent of wit, therefore, where it is possessed, should be cultivated rather as the embellishment of genius, than as its serious pursuit. The rapidity of its inferences, by which the mind is dazzled, though often plausible, should be trusted with caution, and submitted again to the slow and patient re-examination of the understanding.—The powers of ridicule, have their seat chiefly in the region of the imagination. And in different wits

and humorists we trace its exercises through various grades, from those delicate contrasts which scarcely excite a smile, to those coarse and palpable incongruities which provoke the deep convulsive laugh. Within this field is embraced the fine and gentle *humor* of Addison, for this may be considered as a species by itself; the *ludicrous*, which simply excites pleasantry unaccompanied with any disagreeable emotion;—the *ridiculous*, which directs its pleasantries to create contempt of their object;—*satire*, which points them with keenness against some defect in the moral or intellectual qualities of those whom it means to chastise;—*raillery*, which is a good-humored playing upon the foibles of our friends, whose errors are not sufficient to provoke either severity or contempt;—and finally *buffoonery*, which consists in assuming a low character for the amusement of others. This last, however, is always a very undesirable exercise of the faculty of ridicule; for a man can never affect the buffoon without attracting on himself some portion of the contempt which he is endeavoring to throw upon others. A buffoon, or merely the actor of that humble part, is always deficient in the respect which a wise and good man owes to himself.

Of the incongruities most frequently employed to stimulate the sense of ridicule, it will be sufficient to point out only a few examples.—Sometimes a ridiculous

contrast is more strongly marked by suggesting an unexpected coincidence between certain qualities of some mean, and some noble object. Such is that very noted one of Hudibras;

“The sun had, long since, in the lap  
Of Thetis, taken out his nap;  
And, like a lobster boil’d, the morn  
From black to red began to turn.”

This short sentence contains a double contrast of the same ridiculous kind; one between the sun at night, and a lounging lover in the lap of his mistress; the other between the changing tints of the morning, and the alteration of color in a lobster under the operation of cooking.—Sometimes the sensation is strongly excited by certain littlenesses, or slight blunders, displayed in a great and respectable character; as in that ungracious jest passed by the younger lord Lyttleton on his father, who, in his old age, undertaking somewhat unseasonably, to pay his addresses to a young lady, sallied out into the street, equipped in all the gay habiliments of courtship, with his sword by his side and his bouquet in his hand, but with his head bald; for he had forgotten his wig.—Sometimes great causes are assembled to produce a trivial effect; or pompous language is employed to decorate a mean subject. A similar pleasantry is



often excited by ridiculous parallels drawn between objects, or personages dignified and low; or by foolish pretensions to greatness in weak and ignoble characters unable to sustain them.\* Of all these sources of the ridiculous you will find numerous examples in Gulliver's travels, Don Quixote, the history of John Bull, Martinus Scriblerus, the Dunciad, Hudibras, and in a poem not inferior to this celebrated piece of English low humor, written in our own country during the revolutionary war, entitled M'Fingal.

In the last place, it deserves to be particularly remarked that this powerful principle of ridicule is connected in our nature, in no slight degree, with our moral constitution. Although, in the hands of vice, it may be abused to the most pernicious designs, invading the tranquility and happiness of private life, and enlisting the passions against the necessary restraints of virtue and religion; yet, under the direction of sound judgment, it may be made an important auxiliary to both religion and virtue.—If lord Shaftesbury carried his veneration for ridicule, in which he thought he excelled, to an absurd excess, in maintaining that it is *the test of truth*, we may safely admit that it is often a useful and successful in-

\* See a disquisition on this subject by Dr Beattie, professor of moral philosophy in the college of Aberdeen.

strument in destroying old errors which have supported themselves, not on the foundations of reason, but merely on the prepossessions of time and custom. It may be most beneficially employed to expose to just reprehension and contempt these lighter faults of character, to the correction of which the dignity and gravity of reason can hardly be made decently to stoop; and even to administer a severe but salutary chastisement to those greater vices, which, sheltered by rank, supported by pride, or encouraged by example, set at defiance the gentle admonitions both of reason and religion. And, to other useful, and even virtuous purposes, we may add, that it often serves to multiply our refined and innocent pleasures.

## LECTURE XI.

## CONTENTS.

*Of the active principles in human nature—propensity—  
instinct—habit—sentiment—imagination—reason—af-  
fection, or desire—passion and volition.*

THE FIRST FIVE ARE TREATED IN THIS LECTURE.

HAVING thus far considered those principles in human nature by which we become furnished with ideas, the elements of all our knowledge,—I proceed, in the next place, to point out those physical and moral powers, or properties, which are the immediate springs and incentives of action in man. Our perceptions, which are derived through the channels of sensation, external, or internal, might be a source of enjoyment to ourselves, but would contribute little to the use and happiness of the world, unless the various faculties of our nature were put into vigorous movement by the active principles with which it is endued. These principles may all, perhaps, be embraced under the following analysis;—propensity—instinct—habit—sentiment—imagination—affection or desire—reason—and volition. On each of these I shall content myself with making only a few observations, except the last, which, as it is a subject that has

greatly agitated the metaphysical world, I shall treat with somewhat greater extent.

Propensity may be defined to be a natural tendency to perform certain actions, or to seek for certain enjoyments, prior to reflection, or to any experience we have had of the good or ill effects of those actions, or of those enjoyments. Seldom are men prompted to that course of conduct which may be most beneficial to themselves, or to society, from abstract considerations of utility: they must be strongly incited, antecedently, at least, to the commanding influence of a virtuous education, by some powerful impulse of nature, which acts more directly and immediately than the deliberate and slow conclusions of reason; that is, by some passion, or by some present propensity. Even the necessity of preserving life and health would not always find us sufficiently attentive to its duties without the stimulus of hunger and thirst.—Propensities are divided into the bodily, mental, and mixed.—The propensities which have their seat chiefly in the body, are more usually termed *appetites*, from the strength of desire which they commonly imply. The mental propensities are natural and strong tendencies of the mind to particular exertions of its powers, which have this property in common with the former, that they promote to their respective actions and pursuits. antecedently to reflection and experience. Among

these may be ranked curiosity to know, ambition to excel, the love of imitation, and, in many cases, a strong and peculiar direction of the mental faculties, which usually indicates a genius, or capacity for excelling in particular arts. The mixed propensities, in the gratifications which they solicit, partake almost equally of the pleasures of sense and intellect. Such are those which appear in the protection, caresses and love of children, in the inclinations to society, and especially, the society of the sexes, on which the union and civilization of mankind chiefly depend.

There is an essential difference between the propensities which have their seat in the mind, and those which spring from the body, in the constancy of their action. The former are as equable as all the other operations of the mind; the latter arise only at intervals according to the wants of the body; and when their immediate purposes are obtained, they are, for a season, wholly suspended. To attempt to continue, or to force indulgence after the proper ends of nature are fulfilled, is generally followed by satiety and disgust. The propensities to particular kinds of food or drink, depend at first, chiefly on natural taste, but are afterwards formed more frequently by custom. Custom strengthens natural and often creates artificial tastes, and sometimes, to objects originally

unpleasant, more powerful than the natural. No principles in human nature require to be observed, in their commencement and their progress, with stricter vigilance, or to be put under severer restraint, than our corporeal appetites. Virtue has acquired an important conquest when prudence and habit have limited their wants to the point of temperate indulgence.

Among our mental propensities, all those which tend immediately to the happiness of mankind, and originate from the benevolent feelings of the heart, react with pleasure on ourselves by promoting our own happiness. On the other hand, those which have an injurious tendency, however they may yield a certain gratification in the moment of passion, or under the irritations of provocation, will ever be followed, especially in a generous mind, by painful reflection. A proof how much we are formed for social duties, and for social happiness.

Propensity is sometimes confounded with another principle of action, denominated *instinct*. They are, on several accounts, nearly allied, particularly as they prompt to action, antecedently to reflection, and proceed to their end without the aid of reason. Instinct is a kind of mechanical operation, producing actions relative to our preservation, or enjoyment, simply under the impulse of a strong natural feeling, in which the higher powers of

the mind have not any concern. It is from this principle that the child applies its mouth to the breast of its mother. It knows not the consequence of this action; but the Author of nature has prompted the infant to it for its nourishment, while it has not wisdom to obtain it by any other way. The operations of suction and deglutition, are performed by a very complicated machinery. The infant is unacquainted with the structure of the organ, or the effect of action; but, by a single act of desire, or volition, stimulated by hunger, the whole is put into regular and perfect movement. Many are the actions of men, in situations in which they cannot be supposed to exercise their reason at the moment, which are the result of this principle. But because the inferior animals cannot, in any case, possess the guidance and defence of reason, the Creator has endowed them, for their safety, with a proportionably greater number of instincts than man; or at least than man, who is early put under the direction of a superior principle, is ever called upon, in the ordinary avocations of life, to exercise. Instinct is generally more uniform and certain in its operation than reason: for reason depending for its improvement, and its proper exercise, on the sagacity, diligence, and faithfulness of man, is often liable to defect or error; but instinct, being the provision of nature herself, always goes directly to its end. We see with what uniformity and truth each

animal pursues that course of life for which it was destined;—how unerringly it selects that food which is proper for its subsistence;—and constructs those habitations which are adapted to its state, and its necessities. The works of man vary with his means of culture and science, with his state of society, and with a thousand circumstances which impress their influence upon the operations of reason; but these animals conduct their works with the same perfection in every age. The bee constructs her cells, and the spider his web, without change and without error.\*

Although propensity and instinct, in several particulars, resemble one another, there appears to be this difference between them, that the former expresses that internal impulse which prompts us to seek an object for some want that it relieves, or some gratification that it yields; the latter relates chiefly to the manner of accomplishing its end, which is uniform in all animals of the same species. Children have a propensity to seek for nourishment, but it is by instinct, as I have said, that

\* I am aware that in different climates, and in different situations, we frequently perceive some variation in the instinctive operations of the same animal to adapt them to the necessity of his new state. But in similar situations these variations are as uniform as the original impulse, and indicate only the guidance of nature.



they apply their mouths to the breast. By instinct the bee collects her honey, and deposits it in her wonderful cells, which also by instinct she has framed; whence in the season that forbids her further labors she satisfies the propensities of hunger. And, in like manner, the spider instinctively frames his web for the purpose of taking the insects which he has a propensity to devour.

Our sensations, and propensities, lay a foundation for dividing all objects into two general classes, which we denominate good and evil. All those which afford agreeable sensations, or which are adapted to gratify our natural propensities, we place in the former class; those, on the other hand, which affect us with painful, or disagreeable sensations, or which contradict or violate our propensities, we arrange in the latter. Whatever, therefore, contributes to our own preservation or comfort, or to that of our fellow men,—whatever tends to promote the interest of society,—whatever is supposed to advance the perfection of the individual, or to confer eminence and distinction in the estimation of the world, is to be placed in the catalogue of goods; and all that is contrary to these belongs to the class of evils. When we follow only the guidance of nature in making this distribution, we shall seldom greatly err. But when, in the progress of life, in consequence of any irregular indulgences,

certain appetites acquire an undue ascendancy, our judgments of things become, in the same degree, perverted.

Another principle which prompts, as well as facilitates the actions of men, is *habit*. In its primary signification, habit respects chiefly that facility and perfection in performing an action which is the result of frequent repetition. But the ease of execution commonly produces pleasure in the performance. And we find it to be a law of our nature that we are most happy when occupied in that course of life which custom has rendered habitual. This principle has a powerful influence over human nature, not only in creating exquisite nicety of execution in the operations of the arts, but in giving direction to all the talents of the mind, and in forming both the moral and intellectual character of man. As youth is the period of life most susceptible of habit, and that on which the whole mould and fashion of its after periods principally depends, it is of the utmost importance that the earliest habits of youth, and even of childhood, be well regulated. *Chuse in the beginning*, said a virtuous ancient, *the best course of life, and custom will render it the most pleasing.*

The power of habit, the extent of its influence, and the immense complexity of its operations, are seldom

minutely adverted to, or duly estimated. Examples of its efficacy which we rarely behold, and the process of which we do not understand, forcibly attract our notice, and excite our wonder. We regard with astonishment, for instance, the feats of rope-dancing, and the tricks of legerdemain; but we hardly reflect on the complicated variety of attentions, perhaps not less surprizing, only that they are common, which are blended in one act by habit, in the most simple expression of our thoughts in conversation:—the connexion of the arbitrary sounds which form our words with our thoughts,—the just and graceful articulation of them,—their mutual relations in grammatical construction,—their combination and arrangement in perfect logical propositions,—the means which must have been employed in forming just conceptions of the subjects of discourse in the mind, and discriminating them from such as are erroneous,—with a multitude of other effects, which, when accurately considered, render it wonderful that they should be so quickly, and even instantly combined in the imagination, and so promptly expressed by the tongue of the speaker. How much more wonderful the habitual powers of the orator managing in debate the affairs of a great nation, bringing into act in one moment the rich stores of his memory, the immense extent of his foresight, the vast compass of his reflection and reading, and the infinite

attentions demanded by his subject, by the rules of his art, and the audience he is addressing! A great writer has declared that, if it were not so frequently witnessed, it might well be esteemed a prodigy.\* What application and wisdom then, what circumspection and prudence, what unwearied assiduity, ought to be employed in forming the intellectual and moral habits of youth, on whom the future welfare of their country depends!—What encouragement to hope from the well-directed influence of habit, for the most useful and elegant attainments in literature, or the most commanding abilities in the management of public affairs?

The next of our active principles which I have mentioned is *sentiment*: a principle embracing those movements of the mind which have more commonly been considered by philosophers among our passions. And although they have in some respects an affinity with them; yet have they so much of a distinctive peculiarity as well entitles them to be ranked as a separate class of our active principles.

Sentiment may be defined to be an emotion of the mind relative to good or evil, present or future, in our-

\* Dr Reid. Third essay on the active powers of man.

selves or others.\* It produces a state of feeling rather predisposing to action in a certain direction, than exciting to any immediate effort.

A few examples will probably render the nature of this principle better understood. The import of good and evil having been before explained, we may employ them now as known and general terms in our definitions.—The *possession*, or the near and certain expectation of what is esteemed to be good, creates that agreeable and sprightly state and emotion of the mind which we call *joy*. The deprivation of good, or the actual suffering of evil, produces those distressing emotions which make up the sentiment of *grief*. The prospect of good to be enjoyed, or evil to be escaped,—the probable apprehension of losing the possession of some favorite good, or suffering the pressure of some dreaded evil, creates those emotions or states of the mind which we distinguish by the names of *hope* and *fear*.—Many writers have formerly proposed dividing all our sentiments, and even the whole system of our passions and affections into the classes of *joy* and *sorrow*.—The names of these divisions have certainly been very inaccurately applied. For small undoubtedly is the resemblance between the sentiments

\* See Ferguson's institutes under the head of sentiment. From whom also are taken most of the following examples.

of joy and sorrow, and many of those emotions which are respectively classed under them; between the former, for example, and the emotions of insolence and pride,—and between the latter, and those of displeasure, or of scorn.

Without attempting any scientific distribution and arrangement of our various sentiments, all that I propose is to give only a few examples in order to beget precision in the use of terms appropriate to this branch of our constitution.—When we contemplate our own safety, and the circumstances which contribute to render it stable, we feel the sentiment of *security*. In great success we perceive the sentiment of *exultation*. In adverse or disastrous circumstances, according to the degree of danger which accompanies them, we perceive those of *apprehension*, *terror*, *despair*. When we behold others receiving an accession to their happiness, between whom and ourselves there is no rivalry, or cause of disaffection, we indulge the sentiment of *congratulation*. In their distresses, on the other hand, we feel that of *sympathy* or *compassion*.

When men contemplate any excellent qualities in themselves, they perceive the sentiments of *self-approbation*,—of *elation of mind*,—of *conscious worth*.—Defects and vices, on the contrary, when they are perceived,

produce the sentiments of *shame*, *compunction*, *self-reproach*, *remorse*. Superiority to others, in qualities especially which attract the esteem or admiration of the world, produce, according to the moral disposition of the mind in which they reside, the sentiment of *dignity*, of *pride*, of *vanity*, or *insolence*.—The sentiments arising from the view of the superiority of other men are different, according to the state of our affections towards them, and according as the comparison is made between them and ourselves, or between them and others. If we love them, we feel for them the sentiments of *deference*, *respect*, *esteem*, *veneration*;—if we dislike them, the sentiment of *envy* is too apt to affect the mind that is not under the guard of virtuous principles, or governed by a dignified self-respect.—When the comparison is made with others, the superiority of those whom we esteem produces *exultation*,—of those who have provoked our enmity, *animosity* or *regret*.

After proposing these few examples, simply in illustration of this principle in the constitution of human nature, I shall conclude the imperfect summary by remarking, that, among all our sentiments, which, in their full extent, are almost infinitely various, none have a greater influence on the character and conduct of mankind, except, perhaps, those of conscience, or are more closely allied to virtue, than those of *honor* and *shame*.

These emotions are indeed awakened, not so much by the consideration of the rectitude or criminality of actions, as by the general estimate entertained of them in the public opinion: yet are they useful auxiliaries to virtue, inasmuch as the public opinion is, in most instances, nearly coincident with the laws on which the public morals, which are, in fact, those of the public interest, are founded. This, however, is not a genuine and universal rule, since the splendor, or eclat of an action is too often found to outweigh its morality.

In comparing the sentiments of honor and of virtue, of guilt and of shame, we will perceive that those of virtue produce more tranquility of mind,—those of honor more elevation; the sentiments of guilt create greater compunction, those of shame deeper humiliation.

The imagination, which is that active principle that forms the next object of our consideration, is defined by Dr Ferguson to be the faculty of creating in the mind the images of objects, or scenes which have no real existence in nature; or of representing real objects, and scenes invested with all their circumstances and qualities; those circumstances and qualities, especially which escape the notice of ordinary observers, and strike only the finer or secondary powers of sensation, such as beauty, sublimity, proportion, grace, or harmony.



This definition is not intended to imply that the ideas, or materials which compose the pictures created by the imagination, have not entered the mind through the ordinary organs of sense, and been derived like our other ideas from actual scenes, and objects in nature; but the manner in which they are put together in the fancy, for example, of the poet or the painter, forms a picture which has no real archetype without, to which it can be referred. In the Paradise of Milton, or the island of Calypso, as described by Fenelon, there is not an idea which has not been derived from trees, flowers, streams, or groves which exist in different parts of nature; but never were they arranged in the same order, or with the same enchanting effect as in the imagination of the poet.—This is what is intended by Dr Ferguson when he says that the imagination is the faculty of creating scenes or objects which *have no real existence in nature*. But it will perhaps convey a better conception of this part of our constitution, to consider the imagination, with professor Dugald Stewart,\* as a complex power, consisting of fancy, taste, and judgment. A man of fancy has a quick and lively perception of those secondary sensations or qualities, which we denominate beauty, sublimity, grace, proportion, with others of the same class, derived from all the various objects in nature, and

\* Elements of the philosophy of the human mind—page 136.

possesses the power of calling them up with promptness and variety adapted to the illustration and embellishment of every subject. But this luxuriant power is apt to shoot wild, and to fill the mind with a confusion of beauties, unless it be combined with judgment and taste to select those which are most proper for the occasion, and arrange them in such order as to form the most agreeable pictures in the mind. From this description, the imagination may be called the *picture-making* faculty of the soul. In the delineation of real scenes, as well as in creating such as are new, or have no existence in nature, it frames its descriptions chiefly by touching those vivid secondary sensations which its subject is calculated to excite, rather than by retracing the mere impressions of external sense. We may explain this difference by supposing on one hand the recital of a plain, judicious traveller, who aims simply at giving a geographical description of the surface of a beautiful country which shall be accurate in all its parts; on the other hand, the picture of a poet of genius presenting to us the same scene. He draws the landscape with equal accuracy, but with a coloring of fancy entirely new. He employs words that glow, and images that make us feel their beauties, touching every finer chord of internal sensation.

The materials out of which the pictures of the imagination are framed, are limited entirely by Mr Addison to such as enter the mind through the eye. "We cannot, says he, have a single image in the fancy that did not make its first entrance through the sight." Perfectly according with this opinion is that of Dr Reid of Glasgow.—"Imagination properly signifies a lively conception of objects of sight." This is certainly a slight inadvertence in that elegant critic, and that profound philosopher. For, although much the most numerous and various classes of the ideas, which enter into the combinations of the imagination, have been introduced by this sense, and although the term itself seems to have been originally borrowed from the images of sight; yet undoubtedly it embraces all the perceptions introduced by any other of our faculties which may contribute to form agreeable pictures in the fancy.—In the following beautiful passage from the first eclogue of Virgil, the poet draws upon the ear in the sweet langour of nature just inclining to repose, and the pensive emotions of the heart, for the finest images in this simple and delightful scene!

Hinc tibi, quæ semper vicino ab limite sepes,

Hyblæis apibus florem depasta salicti,

Sæpe levi somnum suadet inire susurro.

Hinc alta ab rupe canet frondator ad auras;

Nec tamen interea raucæ, tua cura, palumbes,

Nec gemere æria cessabit turtur ab ulmo.

in passing from one subject to another, we cannot discern some connexion between the different parts, or that in the groupes which it assembles together there are not some principles of union which have led to the association.

It has been a subject of enquiry among philosophers what are the principles of association among our ideas that most naturally guide the train of the mind's thoughts, especially in the excursions of a poetic imagination, or the investigations of science. Mr Hume among the moderns, is the first, perhaps, who has attempted to give a regular analysis of these principles, which he endeavored to reduce to the three following; resemblance, contiguity in time or in place, and cause and effect; by which last he means, according to his philosophy, only antecedents and consequents. Writers, since Mr Hume's time, have considerably increased the number of these associating principles. It has not, however, been pretended that a complete enumeration of them has yet been made. And as every possible relation among the objects of our thoughts, and even among the words in which our thoughts are expressed, may be a ground of association, such an entire enumeration cannot easily be accomplished. Our ideas may often be associated by resemblance or by opposition in the sounds of the words, and sometimes in the letters of the words which convey them

to the ear. Not infrequently, as has been remarked by Dr Stewart, the grammatical figure of alliteration may bring words and thoughts together which have hardly any other link of connexion; a remarkable example of which we have in the following line of Mr Pope's, in his *Rape of the Lock*;

“Puffs, powders, patches,—bibles, billet doux.”

An extensive collection of these associating principles may be found in Dr Campbell's philosophy of Rhetoric. A few only of the principal I shall barely suggest, referring for the illustration and application of them to the operations of taste and genius to that judicious author.—The first of these, and as far as works of fancy are concerned, perhaps the most important is, *resemblance*. Resembling qualities easily suggest themselves to writers who have made the wide extent of nature their study, and are familiar with the copies of her works so beautifully traced by the fine writers of the ancient or modern æras of literature.

Under *resemblance* may be comprehended *analogy*, which implies, not the perfect similitude of parts, but a similitude of relations among different objects. These are a fruitful source of emblematic representations, of allegories, comparisons, metaphors, and many of the finest figures of speech. Under this principle also is

embraced *similarity of emotion*, comprehending all those objects which tend to excite resembling thoughts, emotions and feelings in the mind. For example, the resembling state of mental feeling and emotion created by gentle breezes, murmuring rivulets, and the melody of birds, would very naturally conspire to associate them together with other objects of a like tendency, in the description of rural scenes.—One of the finest examples, perhaps, in any language, of this similarity of emotion associating in the mind objects which have not any other point of resemblance, is that in the poems of Ossian in which the poet compares the *music of Carol* to the *memory of past joys*. *The music of Carol*, says he, *is like the memory of past joys, pleasing and mournful to the soul*.

The author of *the Seasons*, in an address to a lady, presents to us an image of the same kind, beautiful in the thought, but perhaps too obscure in the expression; for all the associations of a poetic fancy should be the most easy and natural:—

Oh thou, whose tender serious eye  
Expressive speaks the soul I love,  
The gentle azure of the sky,  
The pensive shadows of the grove.

The emotion created by her eye, the index of her soul,

resembles that awakened by the serene blue of the heavens, while retired beneath some pensive shade.

Another principle of association is *contrast*, or *opposition*. Opposites are found naturally to recal one another. Contrast is the source of many beauties in the arts; and the figure of *antithesis*, by the sparkling collision of thoughts, often yields peculiar pleasure to the imagination. In philosophy, distinctions, exceptions, discriminations, so necessary to the precise and accurate discussion of the greater part of subjects in this science, depend on this principle. The orator often resorts to it in the elucidation of the topics which he handles; and often in his most pathetic addresses to the passions. Other principles, directed to the same end, we find in the contiguity of objects in place, and in time; in fitness and congruity of parts, either in single images, or in more extended views: in the simple ode, or the complex epic, or drama.—*Custom* and *habit* are not less natural and important conductors to the train of thought. The connexions in the relations of our ideas which we have been accustomed to pursue, almost spontaneously offer themselves to the mind. The thoughts easily retrace their former channels. Hence the importance of a certain course of studies, of certain habits of reflection, of an extensive intercourse with society, and the world, and of customarily exercising the imagination, and the under-

standing on those subjects on which men expect to be called either to write, or to speak. Such habitual employments of the mind will facilitate its command over all its necessary exertions when required, whether they consist in the closer application of its reasoning powers, or in the freer and more picturesque excursions of fancy.

Strong feelings, passions, or emotions, although they cannot properly be called principles of association among our ideas, yet are undoubtedly calculated to call up in the mind, with peculiar vivacity and strength, all those ideas which are in any way connected with the emotion, and tend to increase its force. They are calculated likewise to assist the powers of expression, and to give to those ideas an easy and impressive utterance in words. Hence the poet or the orator, before he begins to write or to speak, should study to kindle his mind with his subject, and to awaken all those perceptions, and emotions which it ought, or is naturally fitted to excite. Where there is natural genius, the true inspiration of the poet and the orator is *feeling*. The same observation is, perhaps, not less applicable to the sculptor, and the painter.

Another class of associating principles there is, almost exclusively connected with philosophic investigation; such as the relations of *cause* and *effect*, of the *means*



and the *end*, of the *premises* and the *conclusion*. In pursuing these connexions the philosopher is expected to lay down a regular plan, and to follow it with rigorous exactness, rarely permitting any digressions for the purpose of embellishment, or of relieving the fatigue of attention, by the pleasant pictures of fancy. The principles of resemblance, analogy and contrast, and others that have been mentioned before, leave the mind in a more free and easy state, and therefore more especially belong to the province of poetic imagination. It deserves to be remarked of these trains of associated ideas, and the remark serves, in some degree, to characterize the different genius of poetry and philosophy, that the mind in passing along them has power to select any single idea at pleasure, although connected with its principal, by the slightest association, and making it the origin of a new train, to conduct the fancy in this manner, by different steps, through a wide and diversified field, till, by artfully seizing, at length, some related image, it is led back by an easy and natural transition, to the subject from which it had digressed. A beautiful example of this regular play of the imagination, if I may so call it, is given by Virgil in the end of the first book of his *Georgics*, a work that is full of the finest specimens of a cultivated and digressive fancy. He was pointing out to the husbandman the usual prognostics of the weather, so

important to be foreseen by the cultivator of the earth; he passes thence to those meteors, and atmospheric phenomena which the superstition of Rome regarded as indications of civil revolution, and public disasters; this introduces the direful presages which were said to have preceded the death of Cæsar; whence the transition was easy to the civil wars that followed, and the battles of Pharsalia and Philippi. And here we cannot but admire the art with which the poet returns to his subject;—“*the time, says he, will come when the rustic laborer in these fields, will raise from the earth the rusty weapons with his crooked plough, and with his heavy harrows strike the empty helms of fallen heroes, while he admires the huge bones turned forth from their graves; which affords a natural introduction to the continuance of his agricultural labors. There is something apparently casual in the order, and transitions of our thoughts, though strictly connected with the train of our associations, when the mind is in that easy and natural state in which poetry is enjoyed with the greatest pleasure, which is never allowed in philosophic reasoning.*

## LECTURE XII.

## OF THE AFFECTIONS AND PASSIONS.

*Of the nature of the affections and passions—Of sympathy—properly speaking sensible beings only, the objects of affection—the passions higher degrees of the affections—The general system of our affections divided first into the calm and temperate, and the violent—The opinion of the Stoics with regard to the passions—of the Peripatetics—of Mr Hume—The passions often useful and elevated principles of action.—Another division of the affections into the beneficent and injurious—A question whether there are any primarily malevolent affections belonging to human nature; or whether they are not always reflex in their operation, arising only from a sense of injury?—Of malevolent affections arising from emulation, and ambition—The beneficent affections subdivided into the selfish and benevolent.—Two questions whether selfish affections are consistent with virtue?—And whether there are any affections disinterestedly benevolent?*

THE next constituent principles of our moral nature which offer themselves to our consideration are the affections and passions. The obvious affinity of these prin-

ciples naturally throw them to be considered under one class. They are emotions of the mind arising from our natural feelings, or acquired opinions with regard to objects, as being *good* or *evil*; or as capable of contributing to our *happiness* or *misery*. Those things which yield us pleasure, or which we conceive to be means of promoting our comfort, we desire to possess. Those which we know, or apprehend to be occasions of pain we endeavor to avoid, and we feel towards them an emotion of aversion. If they are sensible beings which have been the immediate causes of injury, or benefit, or which we conceive to be disposed and able to inflict the one, or to confer the other, we not only perceive towards them emotions of kindness or aversion, but immediately feel an involuntary impulse to repay, if it be in our power, their good deeds by equal, or by greater kindness, or to retaliate their injuries by some correspondent suffering; unless reason or religion has first subdued the spirit of revenge.

The *affections*, therefore, and the *passions* which are only higher grades of the same principles, may be defined to be *strong emotions, or tendencies of mind, towards objects which we esteem to be good or evil, beneficent, or injurious, leading us to desire to enjoy the one, and shun the other;—or, if they are sensible, and,*

*especially, if they are intelligent beings, to retaliate in kind, respectively, their kindness, and their injury.*

If a sensible and intelligent being be too great or too distant to receive benefit, or injury from us, as is necessarily the case with the Deity, affection then, in a good and virtuous mind, is limited to love, to dutiful respect, to rejoicing in his existence, and happiness. But the amiable qualities of men like ourselves we may be justly said to *enjoy*, by the powerful inter-communion of *sympathy*. A principle, to use the language of a distinguished writer, which disposes the mind to *feel along with others*, —participating in their happiness, sharing in their griefs, and reciprocating all their sensibilities; and which is, indeed, the true amalgam of society. Sympathy, although it ought not, perhaps, to be ranked among the affections, but rather, belongs to the class of sentiments, yet it is evidently a fruitful source of many of our strongest and tenderest emotions of this kind. It is a kind of mental attraction which communicates the action of different minds to each other, and is among the principal sources both of our pleasures, and our virtues. It deserves to be particularly remarked, that none of the unamiable and unsocial affections are designed, or fitted by the constitution of our nature, to call up in our breasts correspondent sympathetic emotions. It exhibits its influence chiefly in congratulation with the happy, and

compassion for the distressed; and entering both with the one and the other into all their reasonable and moderate sensibilities. As it inclines men to assume the tone of the society in which they may happen to be, unless too remote from their present dispositions and feelings, it may be regarded as the great principle of imitation, both in domestic, and in civil life; the charm of social, and the mould of national manners. The forms of politeness in civilized society pay homage to this principle, and demonstrate its tendency to promote all the courteous and benevolent virtues. If the *image of sympathetic feeling*, in the manners of a well-bred man, or woman be beautiful, and interesting, how much more amiable and affecting is the real sympathy of a virtuous and sensible heart! It goes far towards making up a perfect moral character.

It deserves, however, to be remarked that, in proportion to the beauty and excellence of this principle in human nature, is the danger of its abuse. In associations for loose pleasure, vice makes its most rapid progress. With the growth of wealth and leisure in a nation, with the extension of cities, and the multiplication and variety of social intercourse, we see the most profligate vices grow up by the side of the most amiable and useful virtues; and the decline of the public manners, hastened

by the powerful influence of sympathy, along with the refinements of society.

To return more directly to the consideration of the general system of our affections and passions. The etymology of these terms will serve in some measure to explain the acts of the mind which they are intended to express. The composition of the term affection\* serves to indicate its most essential character, which is, its tendency to *do* good or evil,—to impart kindness, or inflict pain on the object of our love or hatred.—It serves also to shew, that, strictly speaking, sensible beings only can be the objects of our affections. We love a parent, a child, a friend; we resent the injury of an envious or malicious man; but we do not, properly, either love or hate, attempt to do good or evil to the inanimate instrument of our pleasures, or our pains. A miser, indeed, is said to *love* money; but it is only for the relation which he thinks it bears to his own preservation and enjoyment. We are said to love the houses, the seats where we have been happy,—the gardens or hills which have been the scenes of our early joys; but carefully attending to the operations of the mind we shall find that they only awaken ideas and pleasures which we formerly enjoyed in those situations, with our

\* Derived from the latin words *ad* and *facio*.

friends, or with ourselves, while yet in all the freshness of our being, and which have become so intimately associated with them, that the one can hardly be separated from the other in our ideas as the object of affection.

By a little inaccuracy and confusion of language we sometimes speak of the relish of the taste or craving of the appetite for certain kinds of food or drink as an affection. One man for example, is said to love Claret, another, to love Madeira. Not unfrequently, a foolish boy, under the irritation of pain, will strike a stone that has hurt him, as if he meant to revenge upon it the anguish it has occasioned him. But the delirium of his passion has, for a moment, transferred to it an imaginary sensibility.—The former is merely an abuse of speech; the latter only an error of feeling. The affections, strictly and properly taken, cannot have any objects but sensible beings. They occupy that middle region of our nature, which is equally remote from appetite and sense on the one hand, and understanding and taste on the other, though borrowing from each, occasionally, either augmented sensibility, or intellectual elevation and refinement. ..

The passions, belonging to the same general class of principles with the affections, are distinguished from them only by the increased violence of their emotions.



The etymology of the term from a root which signifies suffering, or being the passive subject of the action of another, indicates that the framers of language regarded a man when under the influence of passion, as not being master of his own conduct, or possessing a reasonable self-command. Cicero defines it to be *perturbatio animi quæ hominem huc et illuc rapit*.—It hurries the man, for the moment, beyond himself, as if he were irresistibly impelled by the suddenness of its gusts, and the impetuosity of its movements.

This account of the nature, and commotions of the passions, represents them too justly as they exist in uncultivated society, where men are accustomed to indulge them in all their natural vehemence, without subjecting them to the discipline of prudence, virtue, or religion. It is only by reason, reflection, and a judicious moral culture, that they can be effectually brought under that wise restraint, and prudent management, which renders them useful, and often noble principles of action, instead of being, as they too frequently are, only the destructive tempests of the soul.

The general system of our affections, therefore, may be divided in the first place, into those that are calm and temperate, and those that are violent. The latter have usually obtained the name of passions. They are easily

prone to excess, and consist chiefly of those high and ungoverned emotions which have an injurious tendency either directly to others, or reflexly on ourselves. Although, by an easy and not unnatural figure of speech, any strong propensity, or tendency of mind towards a particular pleasure, or fondness for a particular object, if it be greatly disproportioned to its value, may be called a passion. So some men are said to have a passion for gaming, some men for dogs, others for horses ; and one of the kings of Prussia was said to have a passion for men of seven feet high.

Philosophers have not always agreed precisely in the same account of the passions. And the ambiguity of the term has, in consequence, given rise to great diversity of opinion, or rather of theory, among various sects : for men more frequently disagree in their philosophic speculations than in their real judgments concerning moral truth. The ancient stoics, defining the passions to be violent emotions of the mind, always excessive, and always injurious, laid it down as a maxim of their philosophy, that a wise man ought to have no passions ; and that the great end of philosophic discipline was to enable their pupils utterly to extinguish them. That it is the duty not only of the philosopher, but of every man, to restrain all excessive and turbulent emotions of the soul, cannot reasonably be doubted. But the principle once laid down in

the philophic meaning which they affixed to the terms, came afterwards, to be interpreted by their more common and popular signification, which changed, in a great measure, the basis of the whole doctrine of the passions.\* It went to eradicate from the heart all strong feelings, all ardent emotions, almost all sensibility to pleasure or pain, and aimed at producing constant equanimity and composure of mind. And certainly the stoic school has exhibited many most surprising examples of unruffled tranquility of soul under circumstances calculated to make the most painful trials of their fortitude, and patience, of their tolerance of privations and sufferings, and of their superiority to all the evils of life. But too often we have seen the merit of these noble qualities impaired, by the extinction of almost every mild and amiable affection of human nature.

The peripatetics, their rivals, on the other hand, maintained that the passions were not naturally excessive, injurious, or criminal. On the contrary, that they

\* The same thing happened to the doctrine of Epicurus. He laid it down as a principle that the pursuit of pleasure is the supreme law of our nature; meaning by pleasure that dignified and rational happiness which results from the prudent and well-balanced regulation and indulgence of all the principles of our nature according to their respective worth and importance. His followers at length interpreting pleasure in its popular meaning, made their school a school of licentiousness.

were useful principles in the constitution of man. They were the sources of activity and enterprize, prompting him to every beneficial improvement, and every noble atchievment. They confessed, however, that, though, generally, they were like favorable gales in the voyage of life; yet, being liable to sudden storms and dangerous excesses, they required to be subjected to the constant control of reason.

Mr Hume has proposed an opinion of his own, though, perhaps, it is only a revival of the peripatetic principle under a new form. The passions, he says, are the governing principles of our nature; and it is the proper business of reason to be subservient to them.—The true explanation of this apparent paradox is, that under the name of the passions he embraces all the active powers of human nature, which fit man to pursue, and enable him to accomplish the various purposes of his being; and to reason he assigns only the prerogative of judging of the fitness of means to their proper ends, and of directing their application. In this maxim, therefore, under an affected singularity of expression, no more seems to be designed by the *subserviency of reason to the passions*, than other philosophers intend by asserting the control of reason over all the appetites, desires, affections, and every active principle of our nature, pointing out their proper objects, indicating their due proportions

to their exciting causes, and prescribing the best methods for the attainment of their respective ends. Thus is reason, in the system of Mr Hume, made to perform the office of a useful minister to these high executive powers of human nature, to assist them to fulfil their functions in the best manner, to guard them from disorder, and to enable them to attain the most valuable purposes of our being.

Of these various theories of the passions, that of the peripatetics seems to approach nearest the truth, and to be most conformable to the system of nature. The stoics, evidently pushed their principle to excess; but it must be confessed, they made a noble use of their error. On this subject permit me to make the following reflections. The principles of nature, as originally bestowed on man, are manifestly imperfect, and require to be cultivated by education so as to attain that mature state which seems to be designed by the Creator. All need correction, assistance, direction. But virtue does not demand, as has been attempted by some austere sects of philosophy, and of religion, that any of them should be utterly extinguished. No affection, and no passion which the Author of our being has implanted in the heart of man is, in itself, wrong; it is wrong only by *misapplication*, by *excess*, or by *defect*. A man may be faulty in having his passions too weak, as well as too strong. Every

power, faculty, or tendency in human nature is capable of a useful application. It is the proper business of philosophy, or of religion, therefore, not to eradicate the passions, but to direct them on justifiable objects, and to prescribe to them reasonable limits. A man, without resentments, would be a tame and contemptible beast of burden, liable to every insult; on the other hand, one who is prone to rush with blind and precipitate fury to revenge, on every trivial provocation, is an odious and dangerous beast of prey. The passion of love has often exalted the human powers to an uncommon height of generous achievement. A high ambition of glory, an ardent patriotism, and indignation against the enemies of one's country, are passions which necessarily enter into the character of a great hero.

But it is worthy of particular observation, that, though the passions are capable of being rendered useful, and often noble principles of action; yet are they so prone to excess, and by incautious indulgence, are so apt to acquire a dangerous dominion over the heart, that one of the most important purposes of a wise and virtuous education is to mark out the legitimate objects of their pursuit, and to impose upon them prudent restraints.

But if the heart were void of affection, in which term may be implied the passions, life would stagnate; its

finest motions would cease, society would be dissolved, and the chief springs of human happiness would be dried up.

Our affections may be divided into two general classes in another way,—the first comprehending those which lead to offices of kindness towards their objects,—the second, all those which may be regarded as different expressions of aversion; and which commonly prompt to actions hurtful, or destructive to those who have provoked them.—These divisions when attempted to be distinguished by single epithets, have usually been called the classes of *love* and *hatred*. As they may be designated by their tendencies, or consequences, the classification may be made into the beneficent, and the injurious affections. The former class comprehends, perhaps, the larger portion of the affections of human nature; as those which subsist between the sexes, between parents and children, between friends, between benefactors and beneficiaries, with various others springing from different relations. There are philosophers who maintain, as there is hardly any paradox in moral and metaphysical science, which, in the refinements of speculation, has not been asserted, that these affections are not the growth of nature, but the effect of custom and education. It may justly be replied, that the proper office of education is to point out the due degree of our affections

to different objects; more definitely to describe those than is ever done by the primary impulses of the heart, and thereby to save the laudable energies of our nature from being misplaced. It may, for example, discriminate a false from a true friend, it may point out those errors in a child that ought to modify the parental affection, or those circumstances in a benefit which augment or diminish the favor, and will consequently heighten or lower the standard of grateful feeling to a benefactor; but the emotions of gratitude, of friendship, and parental love are the work only of nature. A new affection, more than a new color, can never be the product of education.

It has been made a question, whether there are in human nature primarily malevolent passions arising out of any natural relations of man to man, as we see there are benevolent affections springing from a great variety of social connexions? Or whether all the malevolent emotions are not secondary and reflex, resulting only from a sense of injury?—Among philosophers have existed various opinions on this as on other subjects, some maintaining that the original impulse of the human heart when man meets his fellow man, is that of kindness and social attraction. Others, among whom is the distinguished name of Hobbes, asserting that his first sentiment is that of emulation, rivalry, defiance. This impulse is softened by civilization, but, existing in its



full force in rude, uncultivated nature, it would immediately impel the sullen rivals to mutual injury. Whence the favorite maxim of that celebrated philosopher, that a state of nature is a state of war. And it would appear that the ancient Latins, in the formation of their language, in which a stranger and an enemy are used as synonymous terms, were influenced by the same feeling, or had adopted the same opinion. I am of an opinion somewhat different; that man in the rudest state of nature, may have met his fellow man either with hostile or with social inclinations, according to accidental circumstances; and sometimes according to the constitutional temperament of the parties.

As far as experience instructs us in civilized life, we discover in human nature no primarily malevolent principles; no original impulses to do intentional wrong, or to inflict unnecessary or unprovoked suffering on others. Children, indeed, appear to delight in giving pain to insects, and the inferior animals that come into their power; and men are too often pleased with cruel sports, such as those exhibited in the combats of gladiators, or the fights of ferocious beasts. But the wanton cruelties of children are commonly the mere effects of thoughtless curiosity, without any design of inflicting pain, or any conception at the moment that they are torturing the animal. The barbarous exhibitions of the ruffian and mortal conflicts of

beasts, or men, afford entertainment to the multitude not from any malignity in human nature which enjoys the convulsions and miseries of suffering sensibility ;\* but from delight at the skill often displayed in these combats, and still more from admiration of that courage, which renders the eager combatants superior to pain, and death, through the emulation of victory. These feelings, though yielding a present encouragement to a cruel and criminal amusement, instead of affording proof of an innate malevolence of heart, display a spirit which, under proper cultivation, may be made to contribute to the elevation of the human character, and to ripen heroic bravery into a humane and generous magnanimity.

The malevolent, or injurious affections perhaps always aim at resisting or retaliating some imagined injury to ourselves or to society in which we have a deep interest. Sometimes they are sudden and instinctive efforts to repel, or punish on the spot, before we have time for consideration, the cause of present pain ; sometimes they involve more deliberate designs, to chastise or revenge some actual, or meditated evil. They derive their occasions

\* Those scenes of horrible barbarity which are sometimes witnessed at the stake of superstition, or the guillotine of revolution, are the effect of artificial excitement, in which, in the delirium of false religion or false patriotism, the mistaken zealots are made to conceive themselves the avengers of God, or their country.

from our sufferings or our fears.—They are not always culpable, or unamiable; but only when they are disproportioned to the cause which excites them.

There is another class of malignant affections, consisting in envy, suspicion, hatred, the plotting of private injury, which are always unamiable, though often derived from a principle in human nature otherwise useful and laudable,—the love of superiority and distinction. They are the abuse of weak minds of a provision in our constitution designed by our Creator to improve and exalt it.

Having made this distribution of our affections into the classes of love and hatred, or of the beneficent and injurious, I conclude by remarking that there is one passion which does not find its place properly under the one, or the other. The passion of jealousy between the sexes seems to partake so equally of love and hatred, that, at the first view, it might be regarded as possessing a mixed nature. Perhaps, however, a juster estimate of it, is, that it is such a rapid vibration of the heart between the extremes of the two passions, as its object is viewed in different lights, that they seem to be confounded together in one emotion, which, while it concentrates the whole force of the soul upon a single object,

seems at the same time to dis sever it into different parts by the violence of contrary agitations.

I shall not aim here at going into a complete enumeration of all the affections belonging to human nature, presuming that the few examples which have been given under each class will be sufficient to present a general view of their nature and effects. Dr Watts, in his treatise on the passions, and Dr Beattie, in his *Elements of Moral Philosophy*, have, each of them, presented their readers with a regular system upon this subject, which is worthy your perusal. But both of them have ranked along with the affections and passions many emotions and tendencies of the heart which ought, perhaps, to be classed with appetites, propensities, and sentiments.

But there is a subdivision of the general class of the kind affections, which, on account of its importance, deserves to be particularly mentioned, into those which aim immediately at our own interest and happiness; and those which seek chiefly to promote the interest and happiness of others. The former are called the selfish; the latter the benevolent affections.—Of this division, the second branch embraces those particular beneficent tendencies of the heart which have been already enumerated; and extends farther, to that indefinite good will to

mankind which is implied in the phrase, so often used by moral writers, of *universal benevolence*. It has been doubted, indeed, whether there be in the human breast such a general and comprehensive principle. The whole human race, it is said, is too extensive an object to be embraced under one view; it is too vast to be benefitted by the act of any individual.—But this is not the true interpretation of the principle. It implies only such a regard to human nature,—such a sympathy with all who have the same sentiments, affections, feelings, with ourselves, that we are always ready to enter with kindness into their sensibilities; and, where they need it, to bestow on their wants any aid that is in our power. It is not limited to family, or sect, or language, or nation. The phrase, *universal benevolence*, by which this principle is expressed, might well be exchanged for that of *sympathy with mankind*.

The selfish affections have generally been supposed to form a numerous class,—such as the love of riches, power, influence, distinction, with all the pleasures of our animal nature, and even the most refined of our mental pleasures, if they are pursued with a direct intention for our own gratification. This, however, is misapplying the term affection, making it include propensity, appetite, and every tendency of our nature to seek our own happiness; and even extending it to our attachments

to inanimate objects, to which custom has authorized us, by a figure, to apply the term love.

To speak with strict philosophic propriety, self-love is one affection, and only one;—the desire of deriving happiness from whatever object is calculated to afford it. Each mode, then, in which our self-love is sought to be gratified, whether it be by the aid of sense or appetite, or by any other principle, is, in common language, called a selfish affection. And by this inaccurate use of speech, this class of the affections may be indefinitely multiplied.

Two questions, further, have been proposed upon this subject, which merit your attention; the one by a sect who profess to place virtue solely and exclusively in the exercise of benevolence, which goes to enquire if self-love, or the indulgence of the selfish affections be consistent with virtue? The other, by a species of subtle philosophers who resolve all the principles of human action into a refinement of self-love; who question the existence of a purely benevolent and disinterested affection; that is of an affection which ever inclines, even the best of men, to perform a benevolent action, simply through the love of a friend, without any reflex, or ulterior view to some benefit ultimately to accrue to himself?

The Creator, who appears to have designed the happiness of the human family, has disposed the order of the world for that purpose in a way most consistent with the nature of man. His limited powers are not competent to act at once upon the whole mass of human nature. If each individual were to aim directly at an object so far beyond his reach, the efforts of all would be lost. But as the economy of the universe is established, the care of each man, and of those immediately dependent upon him, is committed to his own vigilance, industry, and prudence. Any surplus of ability, or useful exertion, beyond what is requisite for these primary objects, may be applied to the assistance, and benefit of others, according as their proximity admits, or their necessities require such assistance. By this order, the felicity of the universal system is most effectually provided for, and the designs of divine providence for the happiness and improvement of human society most rationally promoted. Cherishing our self-love, therefore, or exercising to a certain degree, the selfish principles of action, in obedience to the order of nature, and to the will of our Creator indicated by that order, so far from being inconsistent with virtue, or forming even an indifferent class of actions, is the true ground on which stands the most numerous portion of our active duties. Reason and nature require us to take care of our own preservation,

honor, interest, reputation in the world; to form families when this important relation can be conveniently supported, and to continue the race to future generations; but if the Author of our being had confided the fulfilment of these duties solely to the abstract dictates, and the dispassionate orders of reason, is there not just ground to apprehend that, either from inadvertence of mind, or from the difficulty of the task, they would have been often neglected? It was requisite, therefore, that we should be frequently reminded of what nature required, and stimulated to its performance by powerful constitutional impulses. To secure an end so important, the Creator has implanted in human nature a vast variety of instincts, propensities, affections, and connected them at once with our own happiness, and the best interests of society, and mankind. And by that wisdom with which he governs all things, has made our pleasures contribute to fulfil his benevolent designs. Indulged, then, in proper measure and proportion, they are not only lawful, but virtuous principles of action. They become vicious chiefly by excess; that is, when they defeat the intention of nature,—the safety and happiness of the individual, or when they interfere with the reasonable self-love of others. An example of the former, we have in the indulgence of sensual pleasure to the injury of our own health, fortune, or reputation; an example of



the latter, in the pursuit of wealth or power to the injury of our fellow-citizens.

That there are, in the constitution of human nature, affections of pure disinterested benevolence, requires, according to my conception, no other proof than our own experience. Observe with what a sudden impulse of joy a friend meets the unexpected return of an absent friend;—with what instinctive uncalculating ardor a mother will rush to encounter any risk to save her infant from the danger that threatens it. Does the friend, or the mother, wait even an instant to reflect what relation these objects have to their self-love, or what interest they may derive from their safety? Our interest, or personal gratification is always a secondary consideration. The impulse of nature tends directly to its end; its relation to ourselves and our own enjoyment is an after-thought. To say that, in the first instance, we perform a benevolent deed from the pleasure that accompanies it, and from a more refined sensation of self-love, is surely inverting the order of nature. For how shall it be known that pleasure is associated with the act, and that self-love can be gratified by it, unless from experience?

Hence results this conclusion, that benevolence, equally with self-love, is a primary and original law of human

nature;—a refined and exquisite happiness is the consequence of cultivating the benevolent affections, but, undoubtedly, not the cause of their existence;—benevolence being an original impulse of nature, man must be capable of primary disinterested acts of kindness and beneficence, that is, of beneficent acts anterior to all consideration of the advantages to our own interest or happiness which self-love might derive from them. In the progress of life, indeed, and the intercourses of society, we perceive a pure and refined happiness to arise from the frank and cordial exercise of the benevolent affections; we discover that an opinion of a man's benevolence often contributes greatly to his public reputation; at least the apparent want of humane and generous sentiments impresses a stain upon his character, and the association of these ideas becomes so deeply and intimately blended with all our offices of charity, and fills up so large a scope in our motives to its practice, that the advocates of the selfish system of philosophy are often able to draw large resources of example from the general feelings of society. But one would think that a stronger argument for the tendency of human nature to benevolence, independent of its relation to self-interest, could hardly be imagined, than the exquisite pleasure which accompanies its exercise.

The next faculty which I proposed to consider in order to present to you a comprehensive view of the active principles of our nature, was reason. Permit me, however, to refer you to the science of logic, which has lately occupied your attention, for an explanation of the nature and operations of this power of the soul, both in discovering and imparting truth.—Merely observing that, as the limited powers of the human mind are incapable of penetrating into the essential principles and structure of the different parts of nature, but can only distinguish them by their sensible properties, the knowledge of which must be acquired by observation and experiment, the chief offices of reason may be reduced to the four following.—In the first place, to direct and assist the human faculties, in the best manner, in making observations and experiments on the system of nature so as to acquire the most accurate and extensive knowledge of its various objects.—In the next place, to refer things to general classes, in which a community of properties is found; or, by the relations of resemblance, to arrange them into their several genera and species.—Thirdly, to discover general rules and laws of action, both in the physical and moral world; which are to be ascertained in the former, by a certain uniformity in effects leading us to ascribe them to some common law or power in nature from which they proceed; and in the latter, by a

uniformity of sentiment among mankind on the subject of conduct and duty.—And, finally, the last object of reasoning is to apply general rules to particular cases; as in the sciences of politics, jurisprudence, morals, philosophy; or reciprocally, to ascribe to individuals comprehended under general classes, their several characters, qualities, and properties,

These objects may be made to embrace the whole extent of human knowledge.

## LECTURE XIII.

## OF VOLITION.

*Of the nature of the will—of the freedom of the will; or rather of the freedom of the mind in its volitions.—The decision of this question involves questions of great importance to morals.—Of physical and moral necessity—Correction of a supposed error in the phrase, freedom of the will—the error of saying, on one side, that the will determines itself,—or on the other, that it is determined by motives—it is determined by the intrinsic energy of the mind itself, assisted by its powers of deliberation and judgment.—Some plain and simple propositions on the general question.*

THE will is that power of the soul, and volition the exercise of that power which is the immediate cause of action in man. Propensities, affections, and other active principles in our nature, may stimulate the mind to action, and thus prove motives to the exercise of its voluntary powers. These internal emotions, therefore, and the various external objects which tend to incite them, may be regarded as primary and remote causes of our actions; but the immediate and proximate cause, is volition.

The nature of the will is understood, as far as we understand any of the acts or powers of our own minds, only by consciousness. The plainest and most unlettered man perfectly conceives the meaning of these phrases, *I will*, and *I will not*. And the nature of this faculty, as of every other power of the soul, is understood only in its acts.

The principal enquiry on this subject which merits your attention, relates to *the freedom of the will*, as it is generally expressed; or, as it ought, perhaps, to be more definitely stated, *the freedom of the mind in her volitions*.—It is an enquiry on which volumes have been written by the most acute and distinguished metaphysicians, and moralists. And, as they have embraced directly contradictory opinions upon the question, or have come in their conclusions to opposite results, it is probable that there is some peculiar subtlety in the subject, or that they have set out in the discussion on erroneous principles, or embarrassed it by the introduction of the peculiar tenets of their respective sects of philosophy or religion.—One party maintain not only that the will is free in acting, but that it determines its own acts. Another party contend that the will is, in all cases, determined by motives; that it cannot act in any other way; and that, therefore, it must necessarily be determined by the strongest motive, or the last motive in the view of the mind at the

time of acting.—That is, laying aside all consideration of the interior energy or power of the soul over its own acts, the will is, by a separate mechanism, subjected to the impulse and control of motives, as the water wheel, to use Dr Priestly's own analogy, is to the force and gravity of the fluid that turns it round.

One would think, indeed, that it is a question of the utmost simplicity, and the most obvious solution. It is a question strictly of experience; and to experience alone we ought to appeal for its decision. Every man is conscious to himself that he acts freely; and that, in all ordinary cases, when he is not under the impulse of some violent passion, or under the commanding influence of some inveterate habit, he has it in his power to pursue a directly contrary course of action, from that to which he is invited by the present predominant motive. But philosophers have opposed speculation to fact; and commencing with an erroneous principle, that the acts of the will must be determined solely, and irresistibly by the motives before it, as they are presented in the order of nature, they have been led to conclusions contrary to nature and experience. We seem to be free, they say, yet, we are only borne along by a powerful stream to which we make no resistance because it concurs with our inclinations; but which, otherwise, it would be vain to attempt to resist.

In the beginning, permit me to observe, that the decision of this question involves considerations of no small importance to morals. The doctrine of necessity, when pursued to its ultimate consequences, appears to destroy all moral distinctions, and to take away merit from virtue, and demerit from vice. I am aware that notwithstanding the errors of speculation, nature will often find means to enforce the practical dictates of truth and reason. Many of those philosophers who have most strenuously contended to bind the moral world under the chain of a speculative necessity, not only obey the laws of virtue themselves, but, would reprehend any departure from them in others, no less severely than the advocates of a rational liberty. It is, however, too much to be apprehended that the greater part of the modern disciples of this school, have intended to annihilate the true distinction between vice and virtue, except so far as it may be made a convenient political engine of public order. On the regulation of individual manners it has certainly an unfavorable aspect. Those writers who have embraced the system of necessity, connecting it at the same time with the principles of religion, have endeavored, except Dr. Priestly, and a few others, to state a distinction between physical and moral necessity. After all the explanations, however, which have been given of these phrases, they appear to amount only to



this, that the one is the necessity of matter, the other, the necessity of mind. The consequences of the doctrine on the merit and demerit of virtue and vice, seem not to have been, clearly at least, guarded against by the friends of the latter phraseology. If by moral necessity were intended to be expressed the extreme difficulty of changing, or correcting old and inveterate habits, we could admit it as a justifiable figure of speech. But if it be meant to indicate a real necessity, in vicious men of acting immorally, resulting from a depraved disposition of the heart, which is natural, constitutional, incurable, I see not how the term, so circumstanced, at all relieves the consequences, as to the accountability or guilt of the agent, imputable to the principle of physical necessity. To say that the course of immoral action being voluntary, is therefore criminal, is merely an abuse of words, when the will itself, in the language of these writers, is infused by the author of our being; at best, is the necessary result of the moral constitution of man.\*

\* It will be easily perceived that, in these reflections, there is an oblique reference to the extravagant, not to say atheistical tenets of some metaphysical divines. I mean not, however, to enter into any religious discussion. The depravity of human nature, which the scriptures teach, and which experience proves, I am very far from denying, but would strenuously assert. But can any moral necessity be attached to man's condition of depravity, which was not attached to his original

The controversies concerning liberty and necessity have been extended to so great a length, that it would be impossible, in a course of lectures like the present, to give even a concise abridgement which would be intelligible, and satisfactory, of the various reasonings which have been held on one side and on the other. They have, besides, been so mingled with the doctrines of religion, converting the simplicity of the gospel into a system of abstruse metaphysics, that it is become almost dangerous to touch a subject on which each party claims a merit for detecting a latent heterodoxy under the most guarded and philosophic expression of truth. We often see, moreover, speculations so bold, and hear a language so presumptuous, with regard to the power, liberty and prescience of the Deity, as are sufficient to deter us from a subject, simple and obvious in itself, but puzzled by a vain philosophy, and no less vain theology, in which men, in proportion to their ignorance, affect to be acquainted with the inscrutable mysteries of the divine nature, and the way in which infinite wisdom is present with the human will.

state of innocence and perfection? Or do these writers forget their own principle that man has been placed in a new state of trial, under a dispensation of grace? But can any trial be imposed on a subject bound under the chains of an *invincible* necessity, though softened under the deceptive name of *moral*?

All that I propose upon the subject is to state in a few plain propositions, and in as clear and comprehensive a manner as I am able, as far as human duty is concerned, what I conceive to be the truth upon this question, which has been rendered obscure only in consequence of too much subtlety.

And, in the first place, it is of importance to correct an error in language, which has probably contributed, in some measure, to involve the question of *liberty and necessity* in that obscurity with which it has been so remarkably surrounded.—The *freedom of the will*, is a phrase which has been familiarly employed by all parties, and the propriety of which seems not to have been questioned by any. But volition being only an act of the mind, liberty cannot be so properly predicated of it, as of the mind which exercises that act.—When we speak of liberty, or necessity, as predicable of the *will*, there are only two forms of discourse which the advocates of the respective sides of this question employ;—the one, that the *will* determines itself;—the other, that it is solely determined by motives,—both equally unphilosophical and false.

If we ask how the will forms any determination? If the question is not an absurdity, because the will is itself the determination of the mind, we would be obliged to

answer, by an identical proposition, that it is by an act of volition. If then we admit that the will determines itself, it can only be, if the phrase have any meaning, by a previous act of volition. And if we enquire by what is this act determined? we must in the same manner answer, by one still prior—which would lead us through an infinite series of volitions to determine one free act.

If, with the other sect of philosophers, we admit that the will is solely determined by motives, there is no avoiding the consequence that we are not free; but that, all our actions are necessarily subject to the direction and control of that power, whatever it is, which orders the train of events, that is, the succession of motives, in the midst of which we are placed. The will not having any power of deliberating, or suspending its own actions, if there is no controlling power in the mind, it must, like the magnetic needle, be subject to the minutest force impressed, or the minutest excess of force between two opposite motives. On this supposition, the will, in all the ordinary train of life, pressed on every side, by motives of different degrees of strength, ought to be found in a continual vibratory state, till some one, more powerful than the rest, fixes its choice, or till it is disposed to settle on the last, which happens, at any moment, to be within its view. If the will, which has no power of deliberating, but solely of acting, is determined entirely by motives, it must be

merely the victim of events, or the slave of inclination, appetite, or passion, as it arises.

We shall, perhaps, arrive at clearer ideas upon this subject, and approach nearer the truth, by rejecting the phraseology of both parties, and, instead of admitting the hypothesis, either that the will determines itself, or that it is determined by the last or strongest motive in the mind, to lay it down as a principle upon this question, that the mind alone determines the acts of the will, as it does all its other operations.

If it be asked what advantage is gained by this change in the language usually employed upon this subject? For if it be admitted as a principle that the mind determines the will, must it not be by a previous act of volition, involving a similar absurdity to that which we have just rejected? I answer, by no means.—Although the mind determines all our other voluntary operations by the agency of the will; yet it does not thus determine the acts of the will. An act of the will is the determination of the mind with regard to some other object; not with regard to itself. The volitions of the mind are the effect of its own internal energy, not by a previous volition, but by an original, innate power over its own actions, of which every man who reflects upon himself is conscious, but which, like all the other primary perceptions, and opera-

tions of our nature, it is not easy, perhaps not possible, to express in words, except by identical propositions.

But if the mind is determined in its volitions by the influence of motives, will not the same consequences follow as have been shewn to result from the determination of the will by the same means? The will being merely an act, without the power of deliberation or resistance, must implicitly obey, according to its nature, the power which governs it. But the soul being endowed with the faculty of deliberating, judging, comparing, and estimating motives before it acts, demonstrates in the exercise of this power the freedom of its actions. If motive necessarily govern the mind, then the present motive at each instant, when there is none stronger to counterbalance it, or that among several motives which has any surplus of strength above its antagonists, must immediately, and antecedently to all deliberation, determine its action. But the exercise of its deliberative powers affords sufficient proof, that it still possesses the faculty of commanding its own actions. True it is, the mind seldom or never acts without some present motive, that is, without some end in view at the time, although Dr Reid has rendered it probable that, on many occasions, it forms determinations without motive, by the immediate energy of its own self-control; yet no one motive, nor any assemblage of motives, has power to compel it to act in this or that particular direction. We

can still deliberate, compare, judge, reason, concerning their respective value, and the degree of influence which they ought to possess. And when, at length, we yield to the influence of any one, we feel that we yield it a free homage ; we can resist it ; we are sensible of a power to follow the leading or impulse of any other motive within the contemplation of the mind ; or even of any which, though not present, we can call up at pleasure. Thus, though always situated in the midst of various motives, addressed to the principles of appetite, affection, passion, duty, prudence, interest, pleasure, yet are we always able to judge among them with freedom, and to admit or reject them at pleasure. The mind is placed as a judge listening to the pleas of different advocates, and when he has heard them, deciding with magisterial authority between them.

If it be asked, what influence, then, do motives possess over the determinations of the mind?—Only a moral and persuasive influence. Inclination, or duty present, on one side, or on the other, their respective claims, which are, in no case irresistible, unless we may, in some instance, except the effects of violent passion, or of inveterate habit, when the mind contemplates, weighs them, and on the result forms its resolution ; a resolution which on all the common occasions of life, it forms with promptness ; on others, with more deliberation ; but on all with perfect freedom.—Some writers, among whom

we may name with distinction Priestly, and Helvetius, represent human nature, even in the exercise of its moral and rational powers, as so entirely mechanical, that in the whole process of reasoning, no less than in the decisions of the will, it is subject to the certain, though unconscious control of necessity. The language of others seems to admit of freedom in the exercise of our powers, of deliberation and judgment, but, when the decision of the mind is made up, that is, when the motive is completely formed, then the correspondent act of the will must necessarily ensue. They compare the will to a balance in which the least preponderance of weight must turn the scale. And, if it were possible that motives perfectly equal in all respects, could be thrown into it, then it must be suspended in total inaction, like the school-men's ass between two bundles of hay.—All this subtlety of reasoning and deduction, I am persuaded, is contrary to experience, and to our natural feelings of liberty. This, indeed, is not denied by many of the most strenuous advocates of the necessitarian philosophy; though, like lord Kaimes, they say, the sense of liberty is only a delusive feeling, implanted by the Author of nature, more effectually to accomplish the purposes of our own moral machinery.

In the discussion of every subject, we should endeavor to fix, in the beginning, some clear and determinate



principles, that may lay a firm foundation on which our reasonings, and conclusions may rest. Our present subject, although it has been much embarrassed by erroneous hypothesis, and by subtle and abstruse speculations, affords some elementary propositions as precise and clear as those of any metaphysical question whatever. A few of these you will permit me here to state, giving them a very brief illustration, as it is not my intention to go into an extensive investigation of this much-agitated question, but only to open such an introduction to it as may assist your future enquiries.\*

In the first place, it is acknowledged that, in the various operations of the mind in which the influence of the will is concerned, we are usually sensible of the solicitation of some motive more gentle, or more powerful; that is, in every thing that we do, we have commonly some end in view,—the gratification of some propensity, or affection,—the indulgence of some inclination,—or obedience to some dictate of reason or of conscience.

In the next place, although these motives prompt to action, and, in many cases, direct the tenor of our actions, yet do we never perceive that they impose upon

\* Those who have leisure to enter profoundly into the question, may consult Leibnitz, Clarke, Locke, Hartley, Helvetius, Priestly, Kaimes, President Edwards, and Dr Reid of Glasgow.

the mind any necessary constraint in acting. This is a subject on which experience must be the sole test of truth. No speculative or abstracted deductions of reasoning should ever be permitted to establish a conclusion in opposition to the simple and obvious perceptions of our own consciousness. For whatever be the action to which we are solicited, and by whatever strength of motive we are drawn, we find, unless it be in some paroxysms of violent passion, that we are able to suspend acting; we can act in a manner directly contrary to the attraction of the primary motive.—It has been objected to the argument which we would derive in favor of liberty from the power of suspending or altering any of our actions, that it does not in the least impair the principle of necessity; for the new act is the effect of some new motive, if it were only to make an experiment of our own power, which now in its turn possesses the necessitating influence.—I answer, that if the motive to this suspending act, were to make trial of our own power, the experiment surely has been completely successful. But if the advocate of necessity rests the decision of the question on the necessary force of this last motive, here also his argument fails; for again we can suspend the action, and again, and again, as often as the trial is made. And although liberty does not consist in suspending or changing the course of an action merely for the sake of exercising our self-command: yet the

power of suspension or of change which we always feel that we possess, whenever we please to exert it, is a decisive proof that the mind, in acting, is not subject to the constraints of necessity ; but, on the contrary, is perfectly free in yielding to the persuasive influence of any motive.

In the third place, the mind has the power of beginning action, or exerting the acts of its will by its own intrinsic energy. Surrounded by an infinite variety of motives in the structure of the world, in the state of society, and in the propensities, dispositions, and inclinations of our own nature, it has power to chuse among them at pleasure ; it can even change, at the slightest command of its will, the train of motives which it will at any time suffer to be present to its view. All this it does by its own inherent self-command. Motives may incite and awake the mind into action ; but they are subject to the control of the mind. And this control it exercises, not, as I have before said, by any previous act of volition, but by that internal energy and power which the mind possesses over the will ; of which every man who reflects upon himself must be conscious, but which he cannot in any other way explain but by referring to that common feeling of human nature. After taking a survey of the motives before it, and contemplating them as far as it deems necessary to forming a decision, it resolves : that resolution is its will ; in which

it acts like a master who has power to resolve in different ways, concerning the objects of its choice, not like a slave who is constrained to resolve only in one way.

The power of beginning action without being itself impelled by any extraneous impulse, is one of the principal distinctions between spirit and matter. Matter, that is impelled by other matter, receives an impetus according to the quantity and direction of the force with which it is impressed. And without the impression of some external force it is inert. But mind is essentially active ; it is capable of beginning motion, and of communicating motion to other things, antecedently to the action of any anterior force upon it. Otherwise how shall we account for all the motions of the universe ? how account for creation itself ? For we cannot surely be under the necessity here of combating the atheistical absurdity of *fate*, and making all existence depend upon an abstract and unintelligible idea. The Infinite and Eternal Mind, the author of all power and wisdom, has given existence and motion to all things by that intrinsic power which mind possesses over matter, and over its own movements. He could not originally have been moved by any consideration, extraneous to himself. If motive can be ascribed to the Deity, the motive, the power, and the wisdom in him must have been simultaneous and co-eternal with his existence ; or if we can conceive of any order in the divine mind, power, and

wisdom, must have been prior to any system of motives that could arise out of the arrangement of the universe ; for that arrangement, and every motive of action resulting from it, must have first been conceived, and received effect from him. He was self-determined by his own sovereign power and wisdom, conceiving most freely the system, to which he freely gave existence. To say, with Leibnitz, that there was a *best* in the plan and idea of the universe antecedent to the act of the Creator, which of necessity his infinite power converted into fact, seems certainly a very unfounded principle. Much more consistent it is with our apprehensions of the wisdom, power, and perfection of the Deity, to believe that he could have conceived an infinite variety of systems, any of which should have been equal in its structure to that which he has formed ; but, in his sovereign pleasure, he gave effect only to that which exists. No antecedent motive in the state of the universe influenced his action. He created all motives ; and in its conformation, and arrangement, only gave existence to his own idea. As an inherent self-determining power is essential to the infinite mind by which he controls all the movements of the universe ; so has he given to man to possess an image of that power, in the control that he enjoys over his own will and over all the actions of his mind, as well as of his body.

In all disquisitions concerning the will, it ought perhaps to be laid down as a primary principle, than which there can be no axiom in science more evident, that the mind is perfectly free in her volitions. It stands on the same footing with the clearest testimonies of sense and consciousness. This, indeed, is confessed by some of the most strenuous advocates of necessity; although in order to preserve their theory they are obliged to maintain that it is a delusive feeling. They lay it down as a maxim that the human mind acts and can act only in consequence of motives; whence, as they conceive, results this necessary consequence, that it must be determined by the strongest motive, or at least by the last motive immediately present to its view before acting. Whence arises this ulterior consequence, that, the train and order of motives being arranged by another power than man's, his mind, in all its acts, is subjected to the law of an imperious necessity, over which it can have no control.

This naked and bald idea of necessity, in its evident tendency, goes to destroy all moral distinctions; but we have the pleasure of perceiving that nature, in her care for human happiness, often contradicts, by her practical dictates, the errors of a too subtle speculation. And some distinguished philosophers have had the candor to acknowledge that, however certain their principles appear in theory, they are not able to carry their conclu-

sions into practical life. The invincible feelings of liberty, every moment stand in the way of their uncomfortable speculations. Not a few of these hardy philosophers, however, like the French Helvetius, and the British Kaims, boldly avow the moral results of their system, and declare virtue and vice to be only names invented for the use and convenience of society. If the existence, or the happiness of society depends so much upon these names, there can hardly be conceived, one would think, a stronger argument for the reality of the things. But if we degrade a consciousness so clear and determinate into a deceitful feeling, by what criterion shall we admit any principle of science to the rank of an axiomatic or first truth? Is there any proposition, or even any perception of sense, more clear, or more irresistibly convincing than this, that we are free in acting? The clear and ultimate perceptions of nature are the foundations of all truth and certainty in reasoning.

Before I conclude my reflections on this question, I must observe that liberty, as a principle of moral action, has a much more extensive power than merely controlling our general conduct within a certain sphere, according to our present inclinations and dispositions. It extends to the power of resisting our inclinations, of correcting any habits of thinking and acting which may be in opposition to our duty, interest, or pleasure; and in a word,

of changing our moral dispositions. Of this we need no other proof than the obvious effects of moral culture. The most ignorant mind may become enlightened, the most rude and uncultivated taste refined, and the most vicious disposition reformed. And this effect we see produced simply by presenting clear ideas, and distinct examples of virtue, and of taste before it; and by illuminating and directing it in the free and proper exercise of its natural faculties and powers. It is true, when any violent passion has seized, or any inveterate prejudice, or habit, has in a manner incorporated itself with the soul, it becomes extremely difficult, and, in some cases, almost impossible to effect a favorable change. But the ideas of difficulty, and of necessity, are totally distinct. And surely the increasing strength of all moral habits arising from time, and by indulgence, conformably to universal experience, is an argument against the fatalists; unless they will imagine a useless distinction of grades in necessity, where every grade is uncontrollable perdition.

An argument is sometimes employed on this subject which would operate against all power of moral reform in vicious men, unless there be presupposed in them a miraculous change, that is, a change wholly independent on all natural means of instruction and cultivation in the moral dispositions of the heart. Without such a change,



it is asserted, in which, however, the will of the agent cannot have any concern but that of a passive subject, no moral motive can have effect in producing the habits and principles of virtue. A man of depraved affections, it is said, is blind to the proper beauty of virtue; and has, moreover, an aversion to the purity of its sentiments, and to the restraints which it imposes on his inclinations. On both these grounds, therefore, in the first place, want of discernment of the excellence of virtue, which will hinder the effect of any motive drawn from that source; and, in the next place, aversion from its restraints, and from the purity of its sentiments, he will be hostile to every virtuous reform, and therefore incapable of true virtue, as long as he is left merely to the action of his own natural powers.—This is a mistaken view of human nature. There are principles in the moral constitution of man, which lead even the vicious to understand, and approve a degree of virtue beyond their own present attainments, and enable then to perceive, at least, some faint and dawning rays of its beauty and excellency through the mists of their passions, before they are enamored of its perfection. Here, then, we behold a vantage ground, in advance of their actual state of morals, on which moral culture, reason and reflection can take hold to carry forward to an ulterior point, their improvements in knowledge and virtue. And as these

improvements proceed, the same means of assisting their progress continually advance before them.

In this process of the mind there is a striking analogy between the cultivation of morals and of taste. The un-cultivated mind is blind to the finer and more delicate beauties of taste, as the immoral heart is to the excellencies of virtue. It prefers a ruder and coarser execution in all the works of art, because it is not yet prepared to understand and relish those of a higher and more perfect order. Still, however, there are principles in the rudest mind which give a perception of beauty and elegance, in examples properly placed before it, always in advance of its own present state of improvement, and its present powers of execution in the liberal arts. And in these principles we discern the means of still further improvements. These reflections exhibit a proof of the moral freedom of man, and of power over his own actions, to fulfil his duties, and, notwithstanding his present imperfections, to advance in the career of moral and mental cultivation, that ought to be very consoling to human nature. If well founded, they overturn the foundation of all the gloomy speculations of necessity and fatalism.

*Appendix to the 13th Lecture.*

Although I rely with confidence on the practical reasonings which establish the freedom of human action, and would by all means avoid placing speculation on any footing of equality with fact, and the practical feelings of nature, there is one speculative argument for the doctrine of necessity drawn from divine prescience which it may be proper not wholly to omit.—The knowledge of future events, it is said, can be founded only on the certain connexion of causes with their effects ; and this certainty, it is further added, can have no other foundation than the necessary operation and influence of the cause. Any contingency in the event, which they suppose to be an unavoidable consequence of the liberty of moral action, removes the sole ground on which prescience can rest.

How presumptuously will weak man speak of the incomprehensible nature and operations of the Deity, as if there could be any resemblance between the knowledge and action of the divine mind, and that of any of his creatures ! Can we suppose that he reasons, like man ; that he depends for his knowledge of future events on the concatenation of causes with effects, of premises with their conclusion ; and is obliged to proceed with the progressive step of mortals, along his chain of inferences ?—While we reject this unworthy conception of the Infinite, and

Eternal, Mind, it becomes us, on the other hand, reverently to believe that he is always present to every moment of duration, to every point of infinite space : and that his knowledge, instead of consisting of a train of induction, is immediate, intuitive, and from eternity, ever present with the future as with the past, with the freest action as with the most necessary event.

These philosophers repeat the assertion, that choice, or volition, without the necessary determination of motive, is mere caprice, or the uncertainty of pure accident. It cannot, therefore, be the cause of a virtuous act, which must always arise from good motives ; nor can it be an object of knowledge to any being. I answer that the persuasive influence which we attribute to motives relieves the principle from both these consequences. The persuasion of right motives is the only ground of virtue ; which would be destroyed by necessity. The same influence would be an ample ground of certainty to a mind which like that of the Deity should be able accurately to estimate the minutest relations of motives to the tempers, characters, and circumstances of men. A familiar example though derived from our imperfect foresight, may serve to illustrate this conclusion. When we thoroughly know the dispositions of our children, or our intimate friends, although they sometimes disappoint the anticipations which we frame of their actions, yet, in general

we can, without much hazard of mistake, predict, in given situations, what conduct they will hold;—not surely from any knowledge which we possess of the necessary connexion of motives with their ends, for they frequently disappoint us, but from our acquaintance, generally, with the persuasive influence of such motives, on such dispositions. And there are many occasions on which we can rely with confidence on that moral certainty which is the result of the free operation of moral causes.

Were, then, the prescience of the Divine Mind, who knows the minutest movements of the human heart, the slightest and most complicated influences of the infinitely various motives that address it, governed like that of man, by reasonings, inferences, or experience, how infallible might be his assurance, although not built upon the laws of necessity, but guided only by his perfect knowledge of their moral and persuasive powers?—But, as I have already said,—away with such unworthy conceptions and reasonings concerning the Infinite, Eternal, Omnipresent Mind!—All knowledge with him is intuition. It is connate with his existence. All eternity,—the future, as well as the past, is ever present to his immediate view.

## LECTURE XIV.

## CONTENTS.

## OF THE MORAL FACULTY.

*Of its nature—its objects—its extent—its end.*

THE next of the constituent principles of human nature of which I mean to treat, and that which holds the most immediate relation to practical virtue, is the moral faculty ; or, as Dr Hutcheson, and lord Shaftesbury, have denominated it, the moral sense. It belongs to the class of internal senses, and has this property in common with others of that class, that it imparts primary and ultimate ideas on the peculiar subject it was destined to enlighten, which cannot be acquired by any process of reasoning, nor by any other sense, or power of our nature. The moral faculty, then, is that principle whence alone we derive the conceptions of duty and obligation, and of right and wrong applied to human dispositions and conduct. I limit the application of these terms, at present, entirely to moral objects ; although they are in propriety of language susceptible of different applications to works both of taste and of mechanical art. Any piece of mechanism is said to be rightly executed, when it is framed according

to a certain rule. But, in moral conduct, besides the conformity of an action to a rule or prescription of law, *right* implies its intrinsic and essential rectitude, as seen and approved by the heart, or moral faculty, when no idea of the control, or authority of law is taken into view at the time.

This sense is as much the natural and the only *organ*, (if that term may be applied to any of our principles of internal sensation) of the ideas of duty and of right, and their contraries, as the eye is of those of color, or the ear of sound. If we were void of this sense of morality, we might have from other principles in our nature, ideas of reasonableness, propriety, beauty, gracefulness in human actions; but of merit and demerit, of moral excellence, or of guilt, we could have had no adequate conception.

In treating this subject, I shall consider the nature of this faculty,—the objects of its approbation or disapprobation,—the extent of its influence, or how far it is a universal and independent test of the morality of actions,—and finally, the end for which it appears to have been implanted in human nature. After which I shall take notice of some objections that have been made to considering it as a distinct power of the mind.

The nature of the faculty is to be learned from the nature of the ideas with which it furnishes the mind. They

are all of that class which relates to duty and obligation, to moral rectitude and worth, or their contraries. When I am conscious of having done what I ought, when I approve myself for having faithfully fulfilled a duty ; or, on the other hand, when I perceive that I am culpable, or feel the sentiment of compunction for some omission or transgression of a moral law ; these are ideas imparted only by that faculty of which we are treating ; this is a language which it alone enables us to understand. The terms, however, belong to a class of ideas, different from any which have hitherto fallen under our consideration ; and much more important to human society.

By distinguishing accurately the objects of this faculty we shall arrive at more precise apprehensions of its nature.

The moral law of the universe being obviously intended to promote the good of the whole, the image and minister of that law in the human breast is conformed in its dictates to that great design. It requires, in the first place, that the matter and form of the action be conformable to the principles of justice and utility ; but, in order to secure a foundation on which the permanent interests of society can rest, it requires especially that the disposition and intention of the agent be upright, sincere, and benevolent. The moral rectitude or virtue of an action, however, is to be estimated chiefly from the latter consideration,



the intention with which it is performed. Hence result certain moral maxims which are universally acknowledged ; and with them accord the universal and calm dictates of the moral sense. For example, if accidental good or evil result from an action which the agent did not foresee nor intend, neither merit nor blame is justly attached to it, unless some ill consequence have been occasioned by a neglect which indicates a culpable inattention to the duties of justice, or benevolence.—For a like reason, a good or an evil intention will communicate its character of merit, or of guilt to an action, although unexpected, and insurmountable obstacles should have prevented the beneficent, or the injurious consequences it was designed to produce. And, on similar grounds, hurtful or imprudent actions may become criminal notwithstanding the best intentions, if men have not previously employed due application of mind to acquire requisite information on the subject of their duty. But if after having faithfully exerted in this investigation all the means of information in their power they still find themselves obliged, through ignorance, or unavoidable prepossession, to embrace an erroneous conclusion, an excuse for the error of the understanding, ought to be found in the integrity of the heart. According to the apparent claims of justice, or benevolence, the moral faculty will usually give a right decision. But it is of importance to observe, that on no subjects is

error more likely to attach either to the understanding, or the heart, than on those great political or religious questions on which prejudices have been assiduously fostered, and the passions artfully inflamed. The magnitude and importance of the interests supposed to be involved in them, often impose a fallacious face of virtue, and of public good on detestable crimes. The verdict of this moral judge in our breasts may sometimes be surprized in favor of vice, under false appearances of rectitude and virtue. The reason of this will hereafter be more particularly explained, when I come to consider how far it is to be regarded as a universal and independent arbiter of the morality of actions. In the mean time, I must observe that, although uprightness of intention form some palliation for error of conduct, yet to what extent that palliation ought to be admitted, can be known only to him who judgeth the heart. From the preceding reflections it results that the principal objects of the moral sense are the dispositions and intentions of men, and the external action chiefly as indicative of these inward principles.

In examining the nature and tendency of those dispositions which are the objects of moral approbation, they appear to be all of that class which more or less directly contribute to the happiness of mankind. A fact which furnishes one of the strongest proofs of the social

nature of man, and of the benignity of the Creator in placing in his breast the law of happiness, and guarding it by the most powerful sentiments of the human heart.

In estimating more particularly the degree of approbation, or of censure due to particular actions, it is not sufficient to take into view their immediate and momentary effects, but their permanent consequences;—the individual good or ill which results from them, but their diffusive influence;—not the benefit or injury of a single act in a particular case, but the consequences which would arise to social order and happiness from a general prevalence or allowance of similar acts. There may frequently exist particular departures from virtue, or particular infractions of its just and necessary rules, which shall hardly be thought to deserve severe reprehension from the singleness of the effect.—A case may easily be imagined wherein a slight aberration from the truth, a trivial theft, a secret amour, by which no person should be materially injured, and society should not sensibly suffer, might be plausibly palliated to a man's own heart who was not governed by pure and strict principles of virtue, and who looked no farther than to the individual act. But this is not the proper ground on which the estimate of the injuries to society, and the criminality of these acts should be formed. The true question is,

—what would be the consequences to the public morals if such acts, and such a rule of judging concerning them, were to be admitted as general laws of private conduct? The disorder and confusion resulting from such a lax morality would be sufficient to reprobate it in the judgment of every man who is capable of taking just and enlarged views of the interests of society. To a man of true honor, of a delicate and enlightened moral sense, an act of this kind, though it could be rendered ever so single and unconnected with general consequences, though it could be rendered ever so safe, and preserved ever so secret, would be instantly condemned, because, if every man were permitted to act on the same grounds, and morality knows no private laws, society would be dissolved.

The principal ground on which the whole moral law has been instituted is the happiness of human nature ; and every act which commands the approbation of the moral faculty, either bears on its face directly some relation to the good of mankind ; or, though less immediately and obviously, is connected with the general system of benevolent design in the universe. It is not always, however, the immediate view of the tendency of an action to individual, or to general happiness, which is the ground of our approbation, but frequently a certain perception of rectitude, of excellence, of moral worth, appearing in the

act itself. The firmness of a hero encountering danger in a good cause ;—the patience of a virtuous man suffering unavoidable affliction with resignation to the will of Heaven ;—the piety of a dutiful daughter, secretly giving her breast at the risk of her life to nourish a father in prison condemned by a cruel tyrant to perish with hunger ;—the conduct of Scipio restoring the beautiful Spanish princess who was his captive, to her lover who had been his enemy ;—or that of Cyrus in the midst of youth and victory refusing to see one whose reported charms might tempt him to do a dishonorable act, are examples which justly excite our admiration, and from their own intrinsic merit, and independent of every other relation, are perceived to be entitled to the highest praise and reward. True it is, that such virtues, when traced in all their relations, are found to form important links in the chain of general happiness. But, it is as true, that, frequently, that connexion does not immediately appear. And the Creator, in order more effectually to attain the benevolent purposes of his providence, has so constituted human nature, that these acts themselves, and independently of their consequences, become the direct and immediate objects of the approbation of the moral faculty.

The justice of this observation is chiefly perceptible in those virtues which immediately respect the government of ourselves, or the duties which we owe to our Creator,

the benevolent consequences of which are not so apparent as in those which fulfil the relations that we owe to mankind. The virtues of temperance, patience, fortitude, the moderation of our passions, the wise improvement of time ; or on the other hand, the pious duties of a rational devotion, engage the approbation of the heart, not so much from any immediate view of their beneficent influence on the interests of society, though it is true, that the happiness of human nature is ultimately and deeply involved in their practice, as for their intrinsic rectitude, and congruity with the state and moral requirements of a rational being.

But the perceptions of the moral sense, and the sanctions of conscience, which is only the moral sense speaking with authority, have an ulterior view to a law, and a Supreme Judge, to which each man, in his calm and reflecting moments, feels himself amenable. This suggests a new object to this faculty. In contemplating any moral action we consider not only its tendency to produce happiness, or to fulfil the claims of equity, but its conformity to a law, and the will of a Lawgiver who has a sovereign right to impose his commands upon us. These sentiments are essentially connected with the perceptions of duty and obligation, which peculiarly belong to the moral sense. And although this law is hardly at any time comprehended, in its full extent, except by a few who, guided by wisdom

and virtue, have made it the object of their study and research ; yet each dictate of the moral sense contains a portion of that law which is more or less clearly and definitely felt and acknowledged by the plainest and most uncultivated understanding. Hence the ideas which have existed in all nations, without excepting the most savage tribes, of a Supreme Judge,—of a certain conduct of rectitude which he approves, and of wrongs which incur his displeasure ; and hence, probably, the anticipations which have been universally entertained by mankind of a state of retribution hereafter ; and, at the close of life, have been found to animate the virtuous with hope, and to harrass the common crowd with distressing fears. These anticipations and apprehensions which have existed under one modification or another in every region, have, with no small appearance of reason, been attributed by many pious men to the remains of an original revelation imparted by the father of the race to his descendants, and by them preserved with more or less conformity to the original tradition, in the various nations into which they were divided. Giving all the weight to this pious conjecture to which it may justly be entitled ; yet, hardly, except by the light and dictates of this moral principle, could a tradition of this nature have been perfectly understood, or have procured such firm and general belief as

it has obtained among the mass of mankind in the different regions of the world.

It deserves to be particularly remarked that this natural moral law, as far as it is interpreted by conscience, and is enforced by the rewards or chastisements of its inward sentiments, does not bear the impression of an arbitrary law that depends merely upon will and power for its authority, and might, if the legislator had so pleased, have inverted the present ideas of right and wrong. The perception which accompanies these dictates of the moral faculty is that of an intrinsic, essential, and unchangeable rectitude, and excellence in virtue, and of guilt and depravity in vice. Whence results this consequence, that the ideas of a law of original and eternal rectitude, of a legislator and judge whose will this law is, of an intrinsic right and wrong, merit and demerit in actions on which the law is founded, are all objects, or dictates of the moral faculty, as soon as the mind attains any considerable degree of maturity ; and especially when assisted, as it may be, by the enlarged views of reason. These objects, properly defined and understood, will assist in giving a true estimate of the nature and end of this great commanding and judging faculty in the human breast.

I come now to consider the extent of the information afforded by this faculty,—or to point out its proper



office in our moral system.—This is the more necessary, because some writers have extended its powers beyond the sphere assigned it by nature; and others have too much contracted its influence, and devolved its most important functions on reason, custom, or education; and have pretended that moral approbation or disapprobation is merely a modification of our opinions on subjects of moral conduct, formed on one or other of these grounds. The philosophers who incline to extend the power of conscience have presumed to make it a universal criterion or test of what is right or wrong, virtuous or vicious in human conduct, so that simply by inspection it can, without any aid from reason, pronounce upon each action a clear and certain judgment.—This is arrogating to the noblest power of our nature more than nature intends. It cannot pronounce a decision with certainty upon any action, unless it is placed fairly and fully before the mind, with a complete view of all the circumstances necessary to give a perfect shape to the action, and to form a sound judgment concerning it. With regard to a large portion of the actions of mankind this can be the office only of reason aided by observation.

To render this remark the more obvious, I must desire you to bear in mind, that although the Author of our being has planted within the human breast the seeds of moral discernment, they require, in order to arrive at

full maturity, to be carefully cultivated. The moral principle, like reason, or like taste in the liberal arts, has its infancy when it is yet feeble in its perceptions, and liable to error in its decisions. And, like them, it acquires strength by experience and reflection, and especially by profoundly observing the course of human conduct, and tracing its causes, motives, disguises, and consequences ; and having, by reason of use, in the language of Saint Paul, the senses exercised to discern both good and evil. But, in the progress of this improvement from the first faint lights of childhood, to the maturity of the mind, the moral sense is often exposed to be in a degree misled by prejudice, by example, by false reasonings, as well as turned aside by overbearing appetites and passions. And, indeed, from these, and other causes, human infirmity may never be wholly exempt from many errors of moral judgment. But it would surely be absurd to suppose, because the moral sense is liable to error, that, therefore, it was not intended to be any guide or censor of our actions ; or, because reason is not infallible in her conclusions, that she is no judge of truth. Equally absurd would it be, on the other hand, to suppose, because man has a natural power of distinguishing right from wrong in conduct, or truth from error in science, that therefore, the faculties of reason, and moral discernment, have no need of cultivation. There is no

doubt that these principles of our nature are liable to great imperfections and sometimes to gross mistakes, in judging both of truth and duty ; but they are the best means of directing our conduct and opinions which our Creator hath placed in our power. And, as they are susceptible of great improvement in the nicety and quickness of their perceptions, the penetration of their views, and the justness of their decisions, they therefore merit the most assiduous cultivation. And, with respect to both it may be affirmed, that there are many truths, both of practical morality, and speculative science, which, although beyond the talents of most men originally to discover, yet, when clearly proposed to the mind are immediately perceived, and recognized from their own intrinsic evidence. Such benefits may our moral power derive from a judicious cultivation, and from prudently associating with them the assistance of reason, taste, and other congenial principles of our nature.

Having made these general observations concerning that principle which we denominate the moral sense, I shall next exemplify the interference and the use of reason in our judgments concerning particular instances of conduct. In every moral action the principal ground on which we form a judgment of its rectitude or pravity is the disposition or intention with which it is performed.

The external action is regarded principally as the visible expression of these inward dispositions. And it is a fact of the highest importance to be borne in mind in all our moral judgments of actions, that they often assume a variety of aspect according to the state of society, the manners and customs which distinguish an age, a nation, or even a sect of philosophy or religion, or still more particularly, according to the constitutional character and habits of education of an individual. The same external habit of an action does not always indicate precisely the same disposition. Here is room for the interference of reason to correct our own prepossessions by a more enlarged knowledge of the world, and of human nature. In the religious sects with which we are acquainted, an aspect which to one suggests the idea of extraordinary sanctity and abstraction from the world, to another conveys the opinion of meanness and grovelling hypocrisy. The vivacity and excessive complaisance of France, is apt to impress an Englishman with an opinion of the frivolity of the nation, which is retaliated by the French imputing to the English a savage surliness of character. Nothing can eradicate from the mind of a Turk a persuasion of the licentiousness of the manners of Christians, on account of the free intercourse permitted among them between the sexes ; because in the east, where women are, in a great measure, secluded from public view, such

liberties are never seen to take place except among the most profligate part of society : and they are ignorant of the influence of those civil, social, and religious ideas which combine to impress a totally different character on European manners. Capt. Cook in his first voyage to Otaheite formed an unfavorable opinion of the chastity of the women of that island from the frankness of their manners and the style of their dances, which future experience taught him to correct. The same circumstances or exterior face of an action may, from prejudices, habits, and certain associations of ideas previously contracted in a different state of society, convey the most erroneous indications of the moral character of individuals, sects or nations, whose manners have been cast in a different mould. In this fact we find a solution of that unreasonable bigotry and uncharitableness which mark the sentiments of various religious sects towards one another, and of the mutual contempt and aversion of foreign nations.

Does then this diversity of judgment concerning the same actions demonstrate any weakness, or uncertainty in the decisions of the moral faculty? I frankly answer, no. For when each action is placed fairly before the mind, disentangled from all those adventitious peculiarities which custom and education have connected with it, and which obscure and misrepresent it, this faculty will usually pronounce a clear and uniform judgment. We

may often pity the error of a mistaken education, while we acquit the upright intention of the heart. But, as I have said before, it is the proper office of reason, aided by experience and observation, to present the actions of men in their true light, disengaged from our fallacious prepossessions, and thus to make all the powers of our nature harmonize in forming just moral judgments concerning them.

I proceed to observe that, in the views just presented of the moral sense, it bears a striking analogy to our other senses external and internal.

This analogy I shall exemplify in the sense of sight, and in the faculty of taste, which embraces and unites all the finest powers of internal perception. Seeing imparts the ideas of color, and of figure in bodies. Taste is the perception of beauty in the works of nature and of art, as the moral sense is of what is right and wrong in conduct.—In a sound and mature state of these faculties, and in a favorable position with regard to their objects, they will impart nearly the same notices to all men. But the objects of sight may be placed in an unfavorable light, or an oblique position; they may be surrounded by an obscuring, or discoloring medium. In cases of this nature, it requires the aid of reason and experience to correct the error to which the eye may be liable from the position, or

the medium which changes the aspect of the object. But when these correctives are properly applied, the notices of the visual organ will not be deceitful ; it will be found to be the only mean of conveying true information concerning the objects of sight.

With regard to objects of taste, in like manner, the beauty of some is obvious on immediate inspection, as those of sight are in a clear and colourless medium. Others require a minute and critical examination before a just decision can be pronounced concerning them. In every work of genius it is necessary to ascertain its conformity to nature, and to those great principles which the enlightened critic has derived from the careful study of nature. This is the office of reason ; and when reason has been judiciously applied to this end, the power of taste will generally give a just, and a pretty uniform decision with regard to its real merit.

These examples serve in some measure to illustrate the proper office of the moral sense, and the extent of its influence and authority as a separate principle in our rational and moral constitution. It imparts the primary ideas of right and wrong, of merit and demerit ; and is accordingly invested with authority to pronounce judgment on each action which is fairly and fully exhibited before the mind. But to present it in this clear, full and

candid manner, especially where any obscurity, or doubt, originally rests upon an act, is the prerogative of reason aided by experience, and an extensive knowledge of human nature.

By giving this just extent to the moral faculty we take off the chief force of the objections of those writers who deny its existence as a distinct power in our constitution, from an apprehension that the friends of that theory would raise it into an intuitive and universal arbiter of right and wrong in human action.—I conclude by observing that by such a fair and equitable use of reason as auxiliary to the moral sense, we shall often perceive the necessity of equal candor and caution in judging both of national manners and of individual conduct. We may frequently discern unexpected virtues in the midst of unfavorable appearances ; and, often, vice is found to shelter itself under the imposing aspect of virtue.

After treating of the nature, objects, and extent of the moral faculty as a distinct principle of the soul, I come, according to my original proposition, to point out the end which it was intended to serve, the rank and power which it was destined to hold in our moral system.

In the structure and relations of the different members of the body, and faculties of the mind, we can generally perceive some obvious indications of nature which point



to the purposes they were designed to fulfil. No one can doubt of the ends to which the senses, and the various active organs of human nature were destined ; nor can we be mistaken concerning the intention of our speculative powers, or our social affections. And certainly, on no principle in the mental and spiritual system of man does its end seem to be more legibly inscribed than on that moral power which is denominated the moral sense, or more commonly the conscience. Its natural sentiments point it out as the guide, the director and censor of our moral conduct. By anticipation, it indicates to us, on each action we are going to perform, what is permitted, what lawful, what forbidden by the voice of nature ; and on reflection, what has been praiseworthy or guilty. Its dictates possess an authority that points it out as a power designed to control our appetites and passions, which, without such control, acting with violence according to their several impulses, would produce only disorder and misery. Reason, on the other hand, from the nature of its remonstrances, which are rather advisory than commanding, though an useful auxiliary to conscience, seems not properly to be entrusted with the power of control. It can point out what is fit, what is safe, what is useful ; but to these ideas conscience adds the impression of duty, and gives them the authority and sanction of a law. It enjoins, it commands, it rewards, it punishes, it points to

the justice and power of a Supreme Lawgiver and Judge, of whose voice that of the judge in our own breasts is, the faint indeed, but commonly, the sincere response.

A man may be defective in other powers of his nature, and incur only pity or contempt; but if he is defective in moral principle he deserves abhorrence. If he should violate the principles of taste, or of sound reasoning, our censure would be very different from that which he would incur for violating the principles of morality and a good conscience. The censure of imprudence is more easily to be borne than the remorse of guilt. And if the understanding has erred, we can more readily forgive it than if the heart has been criminal. Upon the whole, then, it is evident, from the majesty and authority of its sentiments, that it has been placed in the breast like a presiding judge, whom reason and the other powers of nature are destined to assist by their information, and their counsel.

Objections have been raised from various sources, and by writers eminent for talents and information, against considering the moral sense as a distinct principle in our constitution, whence alone we derive our ideas of right and wrong in conduct—of moral approbation and blame. If that theory had a real foundation in nature, there would, they suppose, be a more complete uniformity of opinion among mankind, on the subject of morals. For although

there is, upon the common rules of justice and benevolence, a general harmony of sentiment, there are exceptions from it, which they think could not exist upon the supposition of such a constitutional and instinctive faculty as a moral sense.

Dr Paley remarks, as examples of the uncertainty of this moral principle, whatever it is, “that there is scarcely a single vice which, in some age or country of the world, has not been countenanced by public opinion. In one country it is esteemed an office of piety in children to sustain their aged parents, in another to dispatch them out of the way. Suicide, in one age of the world has been heroism, in another felony. Theft, which is punished by most laws, by the laws of Sparta was not unfrequently rewarded.”—He proceeds with other similar examples ; to all which it may be sufficient to reply,—that the moral sense is not pretended to be a universal, instinctive, and immediate criterion of right and wrong in all cases, more than taste is, in all instances, of beauty and perfection in the works of nature or of art. It frequently errs through ignorance, and frequently through false reasoning, as I have already shewn ; but we no less frequently err through prejudice in our estimates concerning the morality of actions which have received their form and habit in states of society different from that which has given the shape

and character to our own manners. The justice, or benevolence of an act ought to be judged of differently, according to the mutual dependence of men, and their natural expectations from one another, arising out of their social condition, and the habits of their education. Where no natural and reasonable expectation is disappointed, there the laws of morality are not violated. Let us see how the great rule of equity,—to do to others as we would that they should do to us,—may be modified by such considerations. A hardy American savage ever accustomed to rely upon himself alone in his greatest difficulties, and, if he cannot repel misfortune, to endure it with patience, does not require the same assistance in his necessities as men in civilized society, and therefore, is not in the habit of extending to others an aid which he does not demand himself. Among such a people, charity is not violated by any neglect which does not involve positive injury and injustice.—Again, the hardships of his state, especially in procuring subsistence, which, in that condition of life, can be obtained only by the most strenuous exercises of hunting, become so great in the infirmities of extreme age, when he is no longer fit for the labors of the chase, nor capable of the enjoyment of life, that, having no fear of death, it is frequently his first wish to die. To dispatch him in these circumstances is regarded as an act of friendship. And the ties of domes-

tie society among a people who have never known dependence, being very slight, the son is often selected for this office, and the ideas of justice and benevolence in the breast of a savage, are not wounded in fulfilling it. Uninstructed, then, as his mind is, in a higher reason, his moral sense does not differ materially in the ultimate grounds of its decision, from those of people in the most civilized state, who are equally void of the illumination of true religion.—And still less is the example of Spartan theft a violation of any natural moral principle. The rules and conditions of property are established by the law of the land. If that law, in order to attain a higher purpose, the training of the youth to military enterprize and dexterity, have fixed the tenure of all landed property on this condition, that whatever shall be taken by address, shall belong to the taker of right, there can be no crime in the act, thus invited and rewarded by the law. We err in measuring the acts of other men, or the regulations of other nations, by the customs of our own country. I do not say that there are not many acts committed with the hesitating, and some perhaps with the full approbation of conscience, in consequence of false reasoning: but it is not rare also to make the estimate of their criminality on very erroneous principles. And when the customs, and manners and sentiments of different nations are explained with true philosophic candor, we shall find a

striking uniformity of moral sentiment, amidst the apparent differences of moral action.

But when that ingenious, and generally discriminating writer, whom I have just quoted, resolves moral approbation into a species of self-love, I trust every man will find the refutation of this opinion in his own heart which is not biassed by the excessive refinements of speculation. —“ Having experienced, says he, in some instances a particular conduct to be beneficial to ourselves, or observed that it would be so, a sentiment of approbation, [speaking of moral approbation,] rises up in our minds, which sentiment afterwards accompanies the idea, or mention of the same conduct, although the private advantage which first excited it no longer exists.”—Surely this interested approbation of what is useful or convenient, the tedious result of experience, ought never to be substituted in our theories for that prompt instinctive perception and approbation of rectitude, of duty, of merit, which accompanies the acts of virtue, justice, benevolence. It may increase the warmth of the sentiment, but can never supplant it.

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 END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.  
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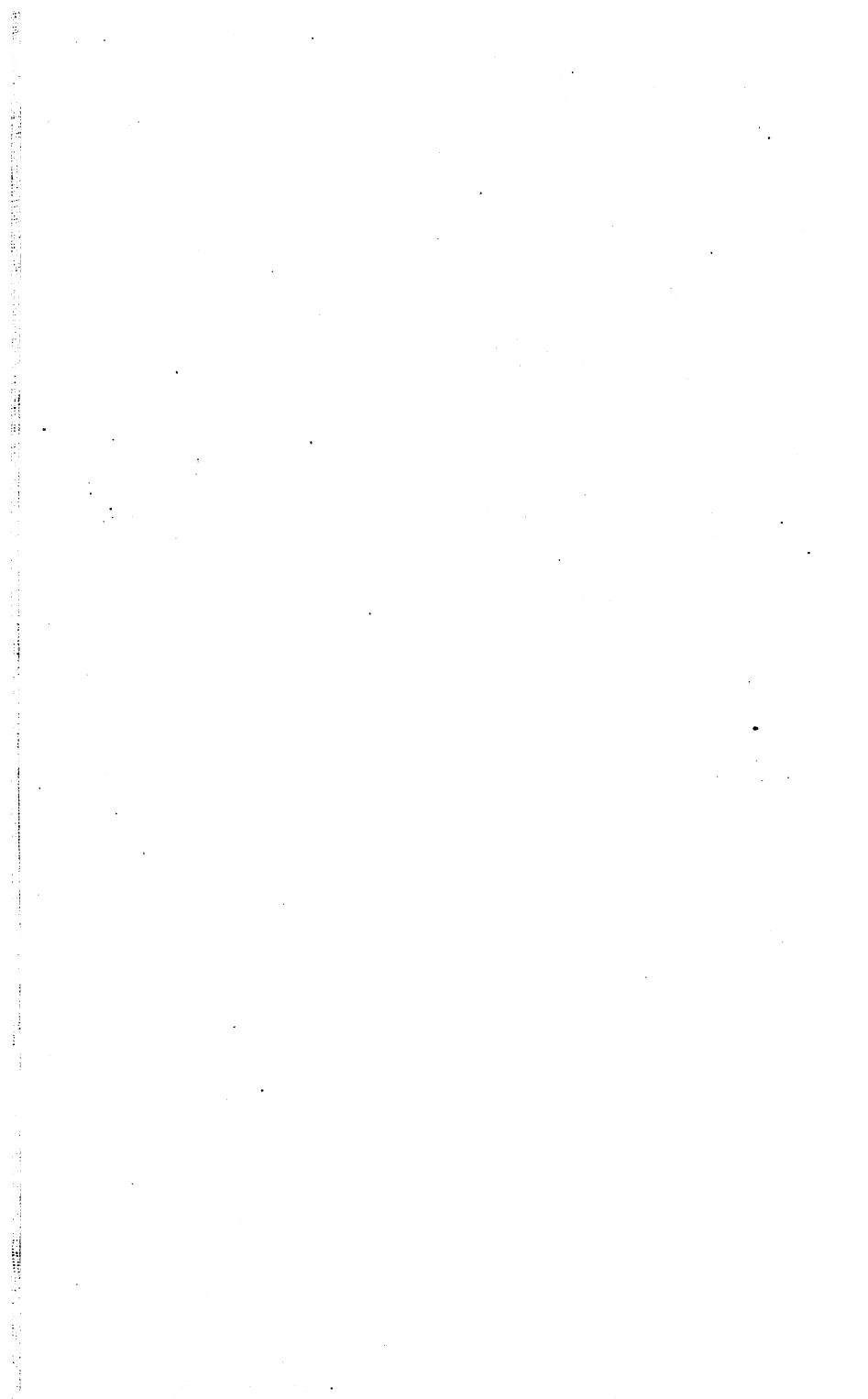












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